











THE CANONS  
 OF  
 GOOD BREEDING;  
 OR,  
 THE HANDBOOK  
 OF  
 THE MAN OF FASHION

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BY THE AUTHOR OF  
 "THE LAWS OF ETIQUETTE."

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The forms, modes, laws, and uses of the world  
*Shakespeare*  
 Neque enim levigant iudicis petantur  
 Præmia

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## PREFACE.

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THE object of this work is to instruct those who have not been familiar with the world, in the customs and usages of good society; and to explain those principles of good-breeding which every man should be

Wax to receive and marble to retain

Of the regulations of etiquette, we willingly say, *Nos hæc novimus esse nihil;* they are trifles; they are nothing. But in human life, trifles are often of immense importance, and little as these precepts may seem, an acquaintance with them is perfectly indispensable. There is indeed a class of men on earth—that higher and purer order of mortals:

They are the few  
Whose virtues and genius will protect them from  
speculation from offences to language; nay, on







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To gain the good opinion of those who surround them, is the first interest and the second duty of men in every profession of life. For power and for pleasure, this preliminary is equally indispensable. Unless we are eminent and respectable before our fellow-beings, we cannot possess that influence which is essential to the accomplishment of great designs; and men have so inherent, and one might almost say constitutional, a disposition to refer all that they say and do, to the thoughts and feelings of others, that upon the tide of the world's opinion, floats the complacency of every man.

This disposition is the guide and aliment of almost all the passions that live in the breasts of men. Ambition, the prodigious grandeur of angels and of gods, has its rise in exultation 'to make their own the minds of other men.' Avarice

rice more often springs from a love of falling under the contempt of the community, through poverty, than from a lust of treasure. And those more phibetian modes of feeling, towards which the minds of common persons are oftener swayed, —as vanity, love, pride,—are but differing forms of this constant inclination.

To gain this notice and esteem, some are relying on intellect, and some on learning, some are expecting it as the result of political power, and others are looking for it as the reward of patriotic actions. It is thought by one class to be aided by magnifying the antiquity and lustre of their family, while another imagines that it may be won by personal haughtiness. But the most successful of those who labour along those avenues to regard, will have a toilsome struggle and a doubtful triumph. A shorter, safer, and surer road exists, than any of these uneasy paths display. Let a man make himself **THE FASHION**, and he wins that treasure of **OPINION**, for which the works and wishes of the world are spent.

Fashion, like Sir Isaac Newton's Matter, is a thing "not to be comprehended in a few words." Its empire is one of the darkest mysteries of life; and

we cannot pretend to explore its title or foundation. It was a madman that asked "What is the cause of thunder;" it was a fool to whom he put the question, and it was a knave that finally answered it. The discussion of the causes of the power of fashion might not be an invocation to call into a circle precisely that assemblage of characters, but still, on other grounds, pagan and Christian, it were discreeter to abstain from such a controversy. We should accept Fashion, in the way that Sir Robert Peel accepted the Reform Bill, as a *fact*,—an actual and settled circumstance, in reference to which our views and conduct must be regulated.

. But while we do not presume to analyze this power, we may be permitted to make what seems to be the simplest statement of the condition of things from which it springs. And that is, that the minds of common men are not strong enough, separately, to form opinions. Men must unite to raise and sustain a thought,—to fabricate and uphold a judgment. Two or three hundred must think together, in order to think at all. It is not that persons exactly adopt their notions from others; each has a joint-stock interest in the sen-

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timent to whose formation and support he is a contributor; each is seized, *per my et per tout*, of common thought. When this operation displays itself in professions and sects, and upon subjects of permanent interest, it produces *canon*; when it extends to lighter things and acts more vaguely, it creates Fashion.

The influence of Fashion can hardly be overstated. It can give its favourites the fame of genius, learning, grace and virtue. It can cause the flippancy of an idiot to pass for the brilliance of Walpolean wit; it can transmute the dronishness of a dullard into a divine dignity. Without it, the greatest general is a coated savage, and the brightest author is a tedious bore.

Its might extends through every order, and regulates the merit-roll of all the professions. It settles the skill of physicians, and metres out the sanctity of the clergy.

It is often won by accident, and often governed by whim. It took up Dr Fothergill because he wore a hat whose rim was three inches broader than that of anybody else. It smiled on Abernethy because he expressed in two words, what another would feel cramped to tell in ten.

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To ~~such~~ cases, no rule can be applied. Towards those points of the compass, we must imitate Sylla, and build altars to Fortune. But as far as that empire is controlled by reason and may be understood by calculation, the easiest and most certain way to favour, is by conciliating those who sit at the portals of the court of Fashion, and to gain the liking and the voice of those who are of her privy-council. *That* is to be done by a course of conduct, towards which some suggestions are offered by the present volume. It is to be done by dress, manner, and tact of action.

For those who merely mean to enjoy life,—whose ‘trade and art is, to live:’—(and all men, how far soever the circle of their days may lie beyond that course, have, in their hours or moments, some points of tangence with that line of purpose)—for those who seek only to sport in the sunshine of pleasure, fashion is not only useful, but absolutely indispensable. Whoever has in heart any schemes of self-advancement or of public benefit, will find the aid of this influence incalculably useful. Accordingly, whatever others may have said about the art of life, we have no

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hesitation in pronouncing it, the ~~art~~ of getting into fashion

But whatever may be the inducements to cultivate fashion for its results of profit or enjoyment it is, in and for itself, a thing so greatly valued and craved by every class of person that the motive of winning it becomes an interesting

subject to all men. Fashion is a large account of the thoughts of all the world. It engages more time and effort than Heaven itself. The boy wonders and is terrified at it. It shares with love the empire of the girlish breast. To win it, some men make slaves of themselves, and some fools. There is not in existence a person under thirty years, and not many of a greater age, who would not rather be a man of fashion, than be the most distinguished man of a distinguished age.

To gain the height of fashion is an easier thing than to keep it.

*Irreparably, soon declines, alas!  
The demagogues of fashion*

It may be gained by accident, it cannot be kept without the finest skill. The following pages present some considerations which, for either purpose, may not be wholly valueless.

TITLE I.  
OF THE PERSONAL APPEARANCE,  
AND APPAREL,

Nothing excels in ridicule, no doubt,  
A fool in fashion —but a fool that's out.

YOUNG.

THE personal appearance is a matter of the first concern. We see what a man is, before we see what he does or says.

- Buffon has remarked that a man's clothes are a part of the individual, and enter into our idea of the character. No man who is acquainted experimentally with the world, or who has reasoned upon the progress of feeling, can regard the matter of dress as an unimportant consideration. So intimately are the impressions of the sense connected with the conclusions of the intellect, that though we may dread, it is impossible to respect,



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a person who dresses very negligently. The notion which is formed of the interior qualities is insensibly influenced by the exterior show "We must speak to the eyes," says Walpole, "if we wish to affect the mind"

The personal appearance is particularly important where women are concerned; for most of them make it a rule to judge of character by the first impression. Good dressing is as important in courtship as in cookery.

In paying a visit, or seeking the company of any one upon foreknowledge, it is manifestly a compliment to be well-dressed, and an insult to be slovenly. But even in a casual encounter, and upon occasions where your habit can have no connexion with the feelings and sentiments which you have towards those whom you meet, neat and careful dressing will bring great advantage to you. A negligent guise shows a man to be satisfied with his own resources, engrossed with his own notions and schemes, indifferent to the

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opinion of others, and not looking abroad for entertainment: to such a man no one feels encouraged to make any advances. A finished dress indicates a man of the world, one who looks for, and habitually finds, pleasure in society and conversation, and who is at all times ready to mingle in intercourse with those whom he meets with, it is a kind of general offer of acquaintance, and proves a willingness to be spoken to. Dress is the livery of good society; and, all the world over, no one can get practice in his profession who does not wear the badge of his calling.

Dress is a thing very significant of inward feeling, and very operative upon outward conduct. That courtier was in the right, who dated the commencement of the French Revolution from the day when a nobleman appeared at Versailles without buckles in his shoes. The early instructors of the Society of Friends displayed consummate wisdom in providing for the perpetual separation of their sect by the distinction of dress.

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It is in this way that military companies keep up the *esprit de corps* and the badge which distinguishes associations and parties is a witness of the principle. The peculiar dresses anciently worn by physicians, lawyers, &c., deepened the limits of professional difference, and doubtless quickened professional devotion. Whoever enters society will find that a fashionable attire will unite and fraternize him with people of the world more strongly and completely than any other thing; and it will be a constant monitor to remind him to act worthy of his vocation of courtliness. There was much philosophy in the reason given by Mr. More, of Norwich, one of the worthiest divines of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, for wearing the longest beard of his time, namely, "that no act of his life might be unworthy of the gravity of his appearance."

A man of sense, as well as a man of the world, will always dress in the fashion. If there were any style of attire which could be called natural

and, indeed, a wise man might be pardoned for deviating from custom so much to — but he who leaves what is fashionable to us, must adopt what was fashionable once, and not a whit more reasonable than that which is in vogue, or he must invent a manner which he must have anything else to recommend it than that it differs from the usage. On that point, the language of Dr. Young is the language of good sense.

Though wrong the mode comply in to sense, when  
In we among others' fold, ~~to~~ s than your own.

Among trivial matters, nothing perhaps, more often distinguishes a gentleman from a plebeian, than the wearing of gloves. A gentleman has worn them so constantly from his earliest years, that he feels uncomfortably without them in the street, and he never suffers his hands to be bare for a moment; a vulgar person, on the contrary, had himself incommoded by a warmth and confinement to which he is unaccustomed, and even if, in compliance with usage, he has

supplied himself with what he deems unworthy of the expense, he will do no more than swing them between his fingers, or wrap them around his thumb. It is not enough that you carry gloves, you should wear them. It is a very common thing to see young men, parading upon some place of public promenade, expensively and even genteelly dressed, having canes, rings, &c.,—but without gloves. The ungloved hand is the cloven foot of their vulgarity.

When you are going out to walk, you should draw on your gloves, and make all the other adjustments in your attire, before you open the street-door. It is offensive to see a man dressing himself in the street.

In full-dress evening company, white or yellow gloves should be worn, but should be taken off in eating. But at a small evening party of thirty or forty persons, which is necessarily a half-dress occasion, it is more proper to wear dark gloves than white ones.

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It is offensive to offer a gloved hand to a person, unless he, too, is gloved. If two persons meet one another and both have their gloves on, they should shake hands without removing them; men unfamiliar with the world often withdraw the glove on such an occasion, not considering that equality of position is the only thing to be desired. But if one draws off his glove, it would be the grossest rudeness for the other to retain his. As it is troublesome to be compelled to unglove, if you, having your glove on, salute one who has his glove on, you should not offer him your hand. The ceremony of shaking hands should, like every other that a gentleman performs, be done with deliberation and composure: if, therefore, there occur to yourself or the other party, any delay on an occasion of this sort, you should wait without embarrassment or agitation, and quietly offer or receive the hand whenever it is prepared. In paying a morning visit, have the glove off, or partly off, in entering; for you may meet some

gentleman of the family, with whom it would be necessary to exchange the hand.

In receiving company in one's own house, one should not be much dressed. A man should not wear gloves, not only because it is senseless and unmeaning, seeing that men, unlike women, only wear them abroad, but also because if any of the company had forgotten that part of his apparel, the gloves of his host would make him feel awkward.

At a morning ~~fit~~, a frock-coat may be worn, and a cane, which together with the hat must be taken into the room and retained in the hand. The hour after which *dress* becomes indispensable, begins with dinner.

When you lay down your hat in a room, or on a bench in a public place, you should put the open part downwards, so that the leather which has been soiled by the hair, may not be seen.

Small articles for which there may be use, as a pencil-case, or card-case, should be carried in

the waistcoat pocket. Nothing should be carried in the pockets of the pantaloons, as it is extremely inclegant to thrust the hand into them. In company, as little as possible should be borne in pockets of the coat, indeed, a full-dress coat should be made without pockets.

Little distinction can be gained in this country by the fashion of the dress. No universal, among the lowest classes, is the habit of extravagant expenditure, and so unlimited is the reach of their rivalry that a gentleman can scarcely show himself twice in a peculiar costume, without causing that his third appearance shall be matched by every apprentice and club-boy in town. The meeting of two gentlemen in the lobby of the play-house, illustrates the similarity of dress which now pervades all orders. Coming from different parts of the building in haste, one accosted the other with "Pray, are you the box-keeper?" "No," replied the other; "are you?"

A three-days' distinction may however be at



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tained, by being the first to adopt what will soon become general. To "set a fashion" in London or Paris is what none but a most aspiring genius could undertake, or a person of great eminence accomplish. But in this country, the thing is easy. The style of men's dress, here, is the London style of two years before, and whoever will copy Regent street before its inventions have become absolutely vulgar, will anticipate Broadway and Chestnut street by some time.

Splendid dressing is not becoming in a great man. The contrast which usually existed between the habiliments of Napoleon and those of his generals and marshals, was strikingly honourable to the former. On the other hand, a man should not dress negligently unless he is a great man. A poor man should dress well; a rich man can afford to dress meanly. One of the greatest advantages of rank is that it permits us to associate with whomsoever we please; and of wealth, that it allows us to live as humbly as we like.

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You should not carry to your toilet *all* the mental absence of the learned Dr. —, and put on fresh garments without taking off the former ones. It is related by the biographer of Sir Humphry Davy, that that distinguished philosopher would often appear before his class with no less than seven shirts on, and as many pairs of stockings; an accumulation effected by simply violating the rule of the old song, " 'Tis well to be off with the old—shirt, Before we have on with the new." His friends were constantly called upon to wonder at the extraordinary variations which his bulk was undergoing; his limbs at one time being extremely thin, and in the next week vying with the proportions of Daniel Lambert.

Seal-rings are, at this day, never worn by people of *ton*. You see them often upon the fingers of second or third rate people; but gentlemen have wholly abandoned their use. Sometimes a

plain gold ring is worn by men of condition, but nothing beyond that.

At a dance or large evening party, a *chapeau bras* is appropriate and elegant; but to carry a common hat on such occasions, as is done by some awkward imitators of fashion, is clumsy and absurd.

If uniformity of manner is tiresome, an unvarying dress is still more so. There should be an adaptation of the costume to the occasion, season, place and hour. There should be a harmony between the stiffness of the coat and of the company; a buckram'd collar at a *pic-nic* would be as much out of place as starchless linen in a drawing-room. Old Elwes, the miser, who was for many years a member of parliament, wore the same unchanging dress at the Speaker's dinners and at those of the opposition, and in a short time every eye had become familiar with it. The wits of the minority used to say, "that they had full as much reason as the minister to be satisfied

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with Mr. Elwes, as he had the same habit with everybody."

You should never present yourself at a large evening party without having your hair dressed and curled. Nothing so decidedly gives a dressed air to the figure as well-arranged hair, and without it, the best and most elegant apparel misses its effect. The chin should also be very newly reaped. We often meet young men in society, whose beards, if they are not so long as that of John Mayo, the painter of Charles V., who could tread upon it as he stood erect, and who generally fastened it by a riband to his button-hole, nor so wild as that of the Snowdon bard, whose hair "streamed like a meteor to the troubled air," are yet negligent enough to display a very offensive degree of carelessness. To all applications on the part of such persons to be admitted into company, society should return the same answer which the Chapter of Clermont gave to William Duprat.

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Before we state what was the answer which the Chapter of Clermont gave to William Duprat, we must promise that beards of great length had at one period come into fashion, in France, and especially among the clergy; and in consequence of this, capitular statutes were framed in some of the French cathedrals against an ornament that savoured so much of vanity and worldliness. The eminent prelate whom we have named, after distinguishing himself at the Council of Trent, was made bishop of Clermont. He had cherished for years a full and flowing beard, which he valued at a Pope's ransom. When the period of his induction had arrived, he went in state to take possession of his cathedral, but found to his astonishment that the gates of the chancel were shut against him, and through the lattice-work he perceived three members of the chapter waiting to receive him in a manner not the most gratifying to his pride. One of the trio held in his hand a razor, another a pair of scis-

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sors, and a third the book of statutes of the church of Clermont, opened at these words—“*de barbis rasis.*” The bishop remonstrated with earnestness, and observed, that though he should be willing to comply with the statutes, yet the sanctity of the Sabbath ought to dispense with the operation for the present. But all that he could urge availed him nothing. The answer that the canons still returned to him was, “BE SHAVED, OR STAY OUT!”

A prudent man, when he buys a new coat, will always get one of a different colour from his last one. If he bought a new one of the same colour, he would get no credit for it,—except on the books of his tailor.

Some persons adopt with very good effect a style of costume which Walpole calls a “puff-dress,” consisting in an apparel so much beneath decency as to excite attention and gain notoriety. When well sustained, it is a trick that takes well with the mob. A distinguished general in the

British army, in the last century, is reported to have dressed habitually in a very fantastic manner, in order, as he sometimes told his intimates, that when people inquired, "Why is that old fool, dressed in such a ridiculous style?" his friends might reply, "That is the famous General —, who took such a place during the last war, a man of infinite valour!"

Fashion in dress has been wittily, and pretty truly defined "a shift to which tailors resort to make men get new clothes before their old ones are worn out." Those who are leaders in the gay world and have sense enough to value economy in expenditure, are often behind the example of people of less *ton*, who have not courage enough to resist the institutes of their tradesmen, and the former often struggle to retard the entrance of a new fashion, until their coats are ready to be laid aside. Before getting new clothes you should enquire whether any new fashions are likely soon to come up, and you

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should judge whether such fashions will probably be rapidly adopted, and if the matter be doubtful you should wait a little while till you can determine more easily. Always have your coat made fidly in the mode, if not a touch beyond it; for that will not cost you a whit more than a plain coat, while it carries to the eye an appearance of more expense.

It is becoming usual to wear the hair long and curled behind, and this will increase till we shall rival the custom of two centuries since. When perruques first came into France, men fond of dress, and very choice and costly in that article, were often seen parading the open-streets with their hats in their hands, for fear of disturbing the architecture of their curls. If the fashion goes much farther in this country, we shall be compelled to adopt a similar plan.





## TITLE II.

### OF THE GENERAL MANNER

Few to good breeding make a just pretence,  
Good breeding is the blossom of good sense  
The last result of an accomplished mind  
With outward grace, the body & virtue join'd  
Young

THERE is a good-breeding of the mind and heart, and a good-breeding of the behaviour and conduct. All of the former is instinctive, most of the latter is conventional. The one inspires our sentiments and informs our thoughts; the other regulates our manner and suggests our action.

The good-breeding of which we at present speak, is, in some sort, natural; yet it does not follow that it comes by gaping. There are many plants which are as genuine as the herb of the

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desert, and yet will not flourish save in the richest soil and under the extremest culture. In every profession, especially in its highest and most interior regions, there is found prevailing a contrived system of principles which control opinion and are the standard of judgment. but when this system is examined and tried, it is found to be the best and truest expression of nature. When Lord Coke assures his readers that the Common Law is the perfection of reason, he takes care to tell them that it is not derived from the sense of common men, but is "the artificial perfection of reason," which has been fixed and refined by the ingenuity of an infinite number of wise and grave men. In like manner the elevated sentiments and principles of honour which pervade the breasts of high-bred men are purified and filtrated to that degree of cleanness, that when first presented to the mind they ~~appear~~ <sup>seem</sup> to it as artificial.

Good-breeding is like religion; it is sanct

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tioned, but not suggested, by nature. The promptings of nature are all selfish; the principles of good-breeding are founded in generosity. We must educate ourselves into those feelings which teach us to consult the welfare and comfort of others, and to bow ourselves to the restraints of honour. It is only by discipline and effort that we can attain to that elevation of character. But high as the result may be, it is always obedient to those endeavours; and every man may take home to himself the assurance that time and toil will enable him to reach the last and loftiest conclusions in that department. The transmutation of the ignoble aims and notions of the nursery into the chivalrous air and aspirations of a gentleman, is as wide, yet as practicable, as the change from the savageness of Kamtskatka to the elegant luxuriance of Circassia; in either case, the progress is by steps. With time and patience, says an Eastern proverb, the leaf of the mulberry-tree becomes silk.

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It is true, there is a class of mortals, upon whose mental birth the Graces have not smiled; and who seem to be hopeless subjects of this art. They are the non-effect of courtliness. After every effort they must at last be abandoned to a reprobate manner. There is truth in the saying, "Ex quo vis ligno non fit Mercurius." There are many natural faculties of the mind that have never been named; and among them is the sense of delicacy in action. M. Rohault was one day endeavouring to convey to a blind man a notion of light. After a long explanation, "Stop," said the blind man,—"I understand you now; is not light made of the same substance as sugar?"—It is equally difficult to give some men notions of refinement.

There are certain sentiments of inherent excellence which should be deeply lodged in the mind, and become the *fond* on which the lighter graces of mode may be afterwards woven. And what are the qualities that are thus fundamental?

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.. In a noble discourse "On Diligence in our calling as Gentlemen," Dr Barrow, who there presents us with the finest definition and most complete and eloquent picture that was ever given of a gentleman,\* pronounces the most essential attributes of the character he would extol to be COURTESY and COURAGE, "which he that wanteth, is not otherwise than equivocally a gentleman, as an image of carcase is a man, without which, gentility, in a conspicuous degree is no more than a vain show and empty name" If between these virtues, of which the former teaches us what is due to our fellows, and the

\*It is certainly an excellent tribute to the merits of the character which we seek to commend that this illustrious prelate should deem that no fairer or fuller exhibition of the perfection of Christian qualities could be furnished than by a selection of the several models of gentlemanliness presented by the history before him. He exhorts his audience to emulate the example of those noble gentlemen Abraham and Lot in being hospitable of that brave gentleman Moses in spreading peace and good order and of divers gallant gentlemen Joseph, Samuel, Daniel Mordecai and others in being patriotic.

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latter tells us what is due to our station, we insert DIGNITY, which will inform us of what is due to ourselves, we shall complete the triple tiara which crowns as infallible the character of a gentleman.

COURTESY is a habit of which the cultivation is recommended by the weightiest and most numerous motives. We are led to it by the generous purpose of advancing the happiness of others, and the more personal one of making ourselves liked and courted. When we see how the demagogue is driven to affect it, we learn how valuable the reality will be to us. "It is like grace and beauty," says Montaigne; "it begets regard and an inclination to love one at the first sight, and in the very beginning of an acquaintance." There is something, too, which all admit to be eminently respectable in the practice of unfailing courtesy; and in favour of such a man, an esteem which is the abiding growth of judgment, will be engrafted on the first in-

instinctive liking. A hasty glance around any circle of society, will discover many who, of the respect and affection of their fellows, are *tenants by the courtesy* of their conduct.

A man's pride should dwell in his principles and not in his demeanour. He should be above thinking anything which may be unworthy of his nature, and above doing anything which may lessen his character or impair his honour; but he should not be above illustrating his rank and breeding by gentleness and kindness. Boileau has observed with admirable truth and elegance, that pride of mind is the characteristic of men of honour; but that pride of air and manner is the certain mark of fools. This is well understood in those countries where life has attained its best refinement and its truest footing; and whoever will make trial of society abroad, will find that the higher he ascends in rank, the more bland and kindly the manner becomes. Among people of the same standing, suavity is



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in proportion to cause, among those of equal sense, it is in proportion to the standing. *Hauteur* invariably indicates a man who in imagination raises himself to a higher platform than that on which he really exists, and such a habit is utterly inconsistent with sincere greatness. It is plain to a glance that arrogance and incivility can never be the test of good-breeding; for that is a display in which the roughest and most violent will always vanquish the refined,—nay, which would place the rudest clown above the highest duke.

Contempt and haughtiness are never wise and never politic. Pride is a losing game, play it with whom you please. Courtesy is the only way to deal with the courteous, and the best way to deal with the rude. "There is nothing, so savage and uncouth," remarked De Grammont, "that a little care, attention, and complaisance will not tame it into civility."

In dealing with men in the haunts of busi-

ness, suspect them as much as you please, and bully them as much as you dare; but in meeting them in society, give them credit for every virtue, and weed from your mind every thought that derogates from the dignity of life. The maxims of Rochefoucauld are true, everywhere; but we should degenerate into the wildness of beasts if we practised them in the drawing-room. Let us admit them where we must, and escape from them when we can. In our proceedings as traffickers or as politicians, we may cultivate cunning as far as may be expedient; but in our intercourse as gentlemen we should aspire to "that candid greatness of mind, which is above fear, and above suspicion; which thinks well, even too well, of others, because conscious of no depraving weakness, no habit of detraction or misconstruction in itself."

Many persons, not very familiar with the world or not endowed with very strong under-

standing, apply themselves with the best possible intentions to fulfil what they suppose to be good-breeding, and become precise and etiquetteish to an intolerable degree. Supposing that courtesy consists in what is done to others, rather than in the manner in which it is done, they play off upon them all the formalities of respect which they can contrive or remember; and thus become tiresome and annoying beyond endurance. That religious exactitude of manner may in form and origin be not very distant from the courtesy which we commend; but its effect is directly opposite; the one being as tedious as the other is delightful. "Nothing," says St. Evremond, "is more honourable and pleasant than civility, and nothing more ridiculous and burthensome than ceremony. Civility teaches us to behave with proportionate respect to every body, according as their rank requires and their merit demands. In other words, civility is the science of men of the world. A person of good address,

who conducts himself with due circumspection, conciliates the love and esteem of society, because every one finds himself easy in his company, but a ceremonious man is the plague of all his acquaintance. Such a one displays and requires too much attention to be a pleasant associate; is too seldom satisfied with what is paid him, and every moment feels his pride hurt by the want of some frivolous etiquette. Ceremony was invented by pride, to harass men with puerile solicitudes which they should blush to be conversant with."

The "rudeness which springs from being over-civil," as Montaigne calls it, is the natural fault of those who have acquired their manners from theory rather than usage. It affects those who live much alone and mingle seldom with the world. The same reason explains the truth of Count Hamilton's remark, that, "ceremony, carried beyond all bearing, is the grand character-

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istick of country gentiy." How often do we meet high-born dowagers of the last age,

Who, through good breeding, are all company,  
Whose manners will not let their silence cease,  
Who think you are unhappy when at peace

Courtesy, however noble a quality it is, should never extend beyond the limits of DIGNITY. We must not make ourselves contemptible, to make others comfortable. Courtesy is most safe when confined to manner; when it extends to action, it is apt either to prove an impertinence, or to be mistaken for sycophancy. To wait till a favour is asked for and then to grant it to the required extent, excites a sounder gratitude, than to anticipate or outrun one's wants. Those who have seen much of the world, will think that there is some truth in Lady Grævean's complaint, that "the more people strive to oblige people, the less they are thank'd for it." In society there are many persons, amongst the thoughtless or insolent, who will take liberties with one who does

not sometimes act upon the defensive : to such it is necessary occasionally to show frigidity or indifference. Nay, there are those, especially among the low-born English who often find their way into good company in this country, whom it is necessary to treat with rudeness, if you would have them acknowledge your just claims.

COURAGE is a quality without which courtesy becomes despicable and dignity ridiculous. It lies not merely in a contempt of danger and an indifference to hardship ; it includes a boldness of heart to attempt everything that is honourable, and a stoutness of temper to endure everything in support of what is right. To pursue, instantly, the suggestion of an honest wish, and to stand firmly by the conclusions of a sound judgment, should be the resolution of every reasonable man. That was a noble motto which Marigny read upon some ancient swords at Bombora in Circassia, which were probably relics of the crusades : " Ne me tire pas sans raison, et ne me

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remets pas sans honneur." To yearn for what we dare not reach, or, to approve what we dare not defend, is a condition of mind to which the bitterest hater might exult to reduce his foe. Courage, says Barrow, is not seen in a flaunting garb, or strutting deportment; nor in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or buffing; nor in high looks or big words; but in stout and gallant deeds, employing vigour of mind and heart to achieve them.

We have thus very briefly named the prominent properties which every gentleman should endeavour to attach to his character. Having resolved that no man shall charge a rudeness upon him, and no man take an undue familiarity with him, let him proceed in the fulfilment of his duty, "unawed by menace, regardless of stratagem, and dreading no consequence but that of a seared conscience."

One of the first requisites for success and happiness in any pursuit, is to respect the profession

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which you have undertaken,—to be persuaded that it is worthy of your best powers, and that your best attention must be applied to its duties. Pride is the refuge in which cowardice often conceals itself. Many labour to persuade themselves that success in society is beneath their ambition, when they more sincerely think that it is beyond their power. Both conclusions are false, but the former, besides, is foolish. Let a man assure himself, first that success is worth labouring for, and then that it is capable of being gained by labour. Let him never go into society with a lazy or drowsing mind. The intellect must be excited and strained, and then it will do great things. “*Cogenda mens est, ut incipiat,*” says Seneca. Constraint of mind is necessary to its fair and proper action.

It is certainly a great error to despise the parts of those who are leaders in fashion, however frivolous the practices of that empire may be deemed. Success in any profession that has



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many unsuccessful candidates, proves ability of some sort. If it be not in the understanding, it may reside in the temper; and if not in the fineness of the temper, then its audacity. The Duke of Mantua remarked to Cardinal Du Perron that a jester he retained in his service, was a fellow of no wit. "Your Grace must pardon me," replied the Cardinal; "I think he must have a great deal of wit, who can live by a trade he does not understand." If a man is a notorious fool in conversation, he must possess uncommon talent in action, to place himself, with that deficiency, at the head of fashion.

Absence of mind should be most carefully shunned, both in conversation and action. In the former it makes a man odious; in the latter, ridiculous. Through this defect, an amiable and well-meaning man is often led to inflict great pain and produce unpleasant predicaments, by acts and allusions which wound the tenderest or the sorest feelings. La Fontaine was the most

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complete professor of this species of awkwardness, that modern times have known. He once attended the funeral of a gentleman, and called the next day to enquire how he did. Walpole tells a story of a clergyman at Oxford in his days, who was generally very *distract*. As he was going one day to read prayers, he heard a showman in the High street, who had a collection of wild beasts, say frequently, "Walk in without loss of time. All alive! alive! Ho!" The sounds were running in his head, after he had reached the reading-desk, and when he came to the words in the opening of the service, "and loath that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive," he called out with a loud voice, to the amazement of his congregation, "shall save his soul alive! all alive! ho!"

A man should make it a point to avoid all singularity of manner. Unconscious eccentricity is a defect which every one should labour to overcome; and every voluntary attempt to deviate

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from the usual manner of doing ordinary acts, is a foible unworthy of a man of sense. In conduct and in speech, the rule of good sense, says Lord Brougham, is to do common things in the common way. For another reason than good taste, it should be shunned by a man of the world. All singularity of sentiment or conduct dissociates man from man, and repels and is repelled.

In almost every profession it will be found that the last perfection of art approaches to the first directness and simplicity of nature. It is so with manner. From the direct style of the cottage, you advance to the fussy manner of the tenth-rate cit; in a better atmosphere, you meet formal, ostentatious, laborious or conciliating manners, till in the regions of the highest refinement you again fall in with the calm and natural. As Plautus says, *Mulier tum bene olet, ubi nihil olet*, no perfume is the best perfume, so the best

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manner is that which is the plainest and most simple.

A young man, during the first years of his entrance into company, should direct his efforts and attention chiefly to women. Among them he should spend his time, and with them should become as familiar as possible. It is by intimate society with accomplished women, that men become accomplished. Polished women are like the loadstone, which not only attracts the steel which comes near, but imparts to it, its own attractive power. Men, like chameleons, take their hue from what they lie on. We catch from their spirit, by a sort of magnetic communication, "those nameless graces which no methods teach."

For prevailing with people, one must be continual and persevering. What cannot be taken by storm, will yield to constancy. Celio Caleagnini, a Ferrarese, entitled an essay which he wrote on the life of courtiers, "A treatise on pa-

“tience.” Frequent, extremely, those whom you would win. Use and habituation have a vast deal to do with liking. Apuleius, in his tale of *Psyche*, has wisely introduced Custom into the train of Venus, as one of the ministers of love. Your much presence creates the necessity of your continued presence, and there will be a sense of vacuity when you are gone. In friendship, the statute of limitations is narrow.

In society, a clergyman should carry his order, as he does his title, as a prefix; others should carry their profession, as they do their description, behind them.

The qualities which are requisite to adorn the character of a gentleman, are well summed up in the description which is given of a pleader in the *Assizes of Jerusalem*, written in the eleventh century. “Il convient a celui qui est bon pleidoir et soutill, que nul ne soit doutif, ne esbay, ne hontous, ne hatif, ne nonchillant.” “A good pleader,” says that quaint authority, “should be

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exempt from the faults of indecision, timidity, false shame, haste, and nonchalance."

It is well remarked by Southey, that if easy and graceful manners are not acquired in early life, they will scarcely ever be possessed at all. The sooner a person makes himself familiar with society, the more thoroughly and readily he will gain a good style. Those who are not conversant with the drawing-room in youth, form such exaggerated notions of the awfulness of company, as hang by them and embarrass them for the rest of their lives. Then, too, the mind is ductile, and the form is pliant, to receive the impressions of sentiment and manner, which good-breeding offers.

*Udum, et molle lutum est, nunc, nunc, properandus, et acris  
Fingendus sine fine rotâ*

PERSE

It must not be denied that to all men, and to the young peculiarly, society is full of dangers. The pleasures which it holds out, must be tasted with the utmost temperance and control, if they

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would not be found fatal. But what condition of life can be suggested which is not perilous to virtue? . . . If we shut up ourselves in solitude, we violate the most earnest and feeling injunctions of the moralists from Bacon to Johnson—  
When alone, man is left to strive

With demons, who impair  
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey  
In melancholy bowers \*

If we might on this occasion, reverentially, employ the divine language, we would say that our effort should be not to take ourselves from the world; but to keep ourselves from the evil that is in the world. With bit of firmest steel, let us snaffle the passions that would drag the car of life down the precipice of moral ruin. Let Reason be sovereign, and not suffragan, of

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\* The note of Lord Byron on this passage is remarkable. "The struggle is to the full as likely to be with demons as with our better thoughts. Satan chose the wilderness for the temptation of our Saviour. And our unsullied John Locke preferred the presence of a child to mere solitude"

Temptation. Let us, at the outset, link our being to the shore of virtue, by cables of the sternest toughness, and daily re-fix the ligature, and we may then trust ourselves to float upon the stream. The wreck of him that is drowned in pleasure is the most complete and mournful of any that is cast upon the strand of existence. The picture which is given by Burnet of the latter days of the Duke of Buckingham, so long "the life of pleasure and the soul of whim," is one of the most melancholy that history contains, and is a fit *pendant* to Pope's impressive portrait of his end. "He at length," says that coarse but faithful painter,\* "ruined both body and mind, fortune and reputation equally. The madness of vice appeared in his person in very eminent instances; since at last he became contemptible and poor, sickly and sunk in his parts, as well as in other respects; so that his conversation was as much avoided as ever it had been courted."

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\* History of his own Times. B. 137.



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He who has resolved to mingle gaily in the delights of society should be convinced that there is scarcely a single enjoyment of the senses which is not attended by some penalty, and that each of the careless pleasures that he woos is the parent of some serious woe.\* “Our pleasant vices are but whips to scourge us.”—“The greatest part of pleasures,” says Montaigne, “wheedle and caress only to strangle us; like those thieves the Egyptians called Philiste. If the headache should come before drunkenness, we should have a care of drinking too much. but Pleasure, to deceive us, marches before and conceals her train.”

And not merely the end, but the existence of those who in the “noon-tide ray” of fashion

\* A powerful,—one might almost say, a tremendous,—picture of the results of a life of pleasure is given in Dr. Young's *Centaur not Fabulous*. That work should be reprinted every lustrum, and disseminated through every metropolis that understands the language in which it is written.

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Display their gaily-gilded trim  
Quick glancing to the sun,

is often wretched enough. The glad in countenance and the gay in conduct, are many times secretly the most unhappy of men. The glitter and racket of the fashionable world cover much that is miserable. Melancthon used to compare a court-life to books of tragedies, which on the outside are adorned with gold and purple bindings, but within contain tales of distress.\*

In the gay world, ridicule is the thing most carefully to be shunned; both as being the fate most easily there incurred, and as being the most severe penalty of that government.

All fools have still an itching to deride,  
And fain would be upon the laughing side

Every one seeks an opportunity to laugh at every body else, and nothing that is ludicrous, however respectable or venerable it may be, es-

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\* See "The Revellers," by Mrs Hemans,—a poem which, though fantastic enough in form, and having more than her usual exaggeration of sentiment, contains a share of truth

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captes the ridicule of the girls and boys who occupy the front seats in society. We cannot be offended at this, it is the quota which each contributes to the general fault, *damus, petimusque vicissim*. To avoid it, you should do nothing that is singular; to conquer it when it is directed towards you, the best way is to turn back the laugh on him who raised it. You should endeavour, however, to profit of that ridicule, by correcting in accordance with it, the peculiarity which gave rise to it.

Trust not yourself, but your defects to know,  
Make use of every friend,—and every foe

In society, one should cultivate versatility of intellect and feeling, and not brood or bore upon a single track or subject. A man who maintains the same temper during intercourse with others, will soon become tedious; and when it is known that he habitually talks on one subject or one class of subjects, or even in one strain, his company will be shunned as tiresome and heavy.

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For many reasons of pleasure and of policy, it is a good rule to endeavour usually to conciliate the young. Johnson has said that as time is always making so many vacancies in the friendships with which we start in life, and disgust and disappointment are diminishing the comfort with which the survivors cling together, every man as he grows old should seek new acquaintances among those who are his juniors. But as a matter of advantage it is equally necessary. A little attention to young men will make them your adherents, and they are the most serviceable one can have: they are ardent, unscrupulous, and ready to do any labour. This is a policy familiar to many great statesmen.

Whoever would attain eminence as a man of fashion, must keep himself prominent in the eye of society. If he cannot procure to be spoken of well, which is difficult where one is spoken of much, he should do what will make people abuse him. Notoriety is more easily transmuted

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into good fame, than obscurity is created into it. Boileau, we are told, was never grieved when his books were abused on their first appearance ; observing with great truth, " that there were no books so bad as those which no one spoke of at all." Let a man of fashion do things which are extravagant and in bad taste, and many will abuse him ; but others will take his part, and on the breath of a faction he will be raised to the highest renown and popularity. When Alcibiades cut off the fine tail of his dog, he well knew what benefit that would do him in the fashion of Athens.

There is nothing more diligently to be avoided than every species of affectation. It is always detected ; and it always disgusts. It is often found among people of fashion. Now, as a hundred years since,

Wants of all kinds are made to fame a plea ;  
One learns to *hisp*, another *not* to see.

To endeavour to be thought possessed of vices

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or defects, is a form of vanity ; and one of the most ignoble. A man of sense will always resolve to present himself to the world in his real character, to do nothing that is not genuine, and say nothing save in a natural manner. To strive to be deemed better than we are, may be pardoned as an instinctive aspiration ; but to wish to be thought beneath our real character, " shows a pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it." " To jig, to amble, and lisp, and nickname God's creatures," is a trick by which the frivolous would escape contempt by sinking beneath it.



## TITLE III.

### OF CERTAIN POINTS OF GOOD-BREEDING

Mores curque sui fingunt fortunam

CORNELLIUS NEGRON

Mihi sic usus est tibi, ut opus est facto, face.

TER

THE formalities of good-breeding will always be kept up by those who remember that much of the distinction of a gentleman is merely conventional, and that it is so intimately connected with *etiquette* that it can scarcely support itself without it. Religion could not be sustained without the aid of superstition, which defends by the name of sanctity the remotest passes to faith; in like condition, *etiquette*, which is the superstition of manner, is requisite to give to the character of a gentleman that importance and mystery which are necessary to its respectability.



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Lord Herbert of Cherbury tells a story of a Spanish ambassador who abandoned a congress because he could not get precedence of the French envoy. On returning to his court, he waited on the king, and explained his conduct. "What!" said the monarch, "could you think of abandoning such an important business for the sake of a ceremony?" The ambassador, piqued at that remark, exclaimed, "A ceremony? what is your majesty yourself but a ceremony?"

Another reason which makes it worth while to know these forms and to keep them up, is, that they constitute, as it were, the attire and symbols by which a gentleman is recognized under circumstances which prevent the display of his character by any other method. Of good-breeding as exhibited in conduct, the transient intercourse of ordinary society shows but little; and even the conversation that passes between people in a drawing-room is so brief and trifling, that we are obliged to form our opinion of the stand-

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ing and refinement of most persons from petty acts that pass before our eye, and from the general familiarity that is displayed with the tone and usages of high life. •

A man of fashion ought to congratulate himself upon the difficulties of his profession, and upon the thorny hedge of *etiquette* by which it is encircled and guarded; they add to the glory of his success, and prevent others from coming in and diminishing the distinctness and separateness of his position. The dread of failure in points of social usage, is like the gallows which the thief justly said was the only support of his trade. There was great sagacity in the conduct of the usurer at Vicenza, who called on the parson of the parish and desired him to preach a sermon against the practice of the vice of usury. The priest, who knew his character, asked the reasons of that request. "There are so many persons in this parish who follow my calling," replied the money-lender, "that I gain little by

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it; but should your sermon correct and restrain this practice, I should then enjoy my profession alone." ~

In the intercourse of social life, the importance of little things is very great. Trifles are capable of expressing a greater degree both of regard and disregard, than larger actions. If you are attentive in trivial affairs, it is said your regard extends even to the smallest considerations; if you are neglectful in light and unimportant matters, it is observed that you have not enough respect to be civil even in the minutest concerns. That person who picked up the hat of Mr. Madison at the flight of Bladensburgh, exhibited an abasement of flattery which it would have been difficult to exceed. and that minister who refused to take up Napoleon's when he had dropped it in the council-chamber as a test of the consideration he was held in, displayed a thoroughness of indifference which assured the emperor that his fate was sealed.

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We shall here set down, without order or connexion, some points of *etiquette* necessary to be known and practised by him who would be well-bred in manner •

When company enter the room at an evening party or ball, the gentleman of the house should go up and bow to them before they present themselves to the lady \* He may mention to them in what part of the room they will find the lady of the house, if she is not directly in their view; but he should not conduct and accompany them up to her, as is often done by persons of inferior breeding who wish to be polite. That this is an error will be seen by reflecting that it is the duty of the mistress of the house to meet and receive her guests at their first entrance into her house; and to go in quest of them, if she has not found

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\* I have employed in this volume, the words 'lady' and 'gentleman' instead of the words 'woman' and 'man,' which are more correct expressions and more usual in the best circles. I have done so in deference to the taste and practice of the greater number in this country

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them at once; and no member of the family should by his conduct admit that it is necessary for the visitors to seek about for the hostess. He should either let the reception take its course, or should go and tell the lady of the house to come forward and receive such-or-such a person.

If you are at another house than your own, and see a lady coming in, unattended by a gentleman, you should offer her your arm and take her up to the lady of the house. You should do the same to ladies who are taking leave, and you should conduct them to their carriages.

If a lady is going to her carriage, or is alone in any public place where it is usual or would be convenient for ladies to be attended, you should offer her your arm and service, even if you do not know her. To do so, in a private room, as in the case above mentioned, might be thought a liberty.

When a waiter of coffee or of preserves is handed to a lady she should help herself, and

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gentlemen standing by should permit her to do so, and should abstain from any interference. It was once deemed courtly for gentlemen to save ladies from this trouble, by putting sugar and cream in their coffee for them, and asking them on other occasions what they would be helped to; but it is now clearly understood that the effort of a lady's helping herself in fact amounts to nothing, and that by doing so, she can gratify her own taste and choice much better than when another serves her, and, at the same time, that quietness and ease of action, which is the chief and best characteristic of society, is attained in a much higher degree. In second-rate houses you still see the host going round with every waiter in the *fussy* manner of the last century, and demanding how much sugar and cream every one will take in their coffee. But so perfectly disused among the best-bred persons is this practice, that if you see any man doing it, you may

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confidently decide that he is not accustomed to the first society.

If a lady and gentleman are conversing together at an evening party, it would be a rudeness in another person to go up and interrupt them by introducing a new topic of observation. If you are sure that there is nothing of a particular and private interest passing between them, you may *join* their conversation and strike into the current of their remarks; yet if you then find that they are so much engaged and entertained by the discussion that they were holding together, as to render the termination or the change of its character unwelcome, you should withdraw. If, however, two persons are occupied with one another, upon what you guess to be terms peculiarly delicate and particular, you should entirely withhold yourself from their company. If you are talking to a lady with the ordinary indifference of a common acquaintance, and are only waiting

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till some one else comes up, for an opportunity to leave her, you should not move the instant another arrives, for that would look as if your previous tarrying had been compulsory; but you should remain a few moments and then turn away.

At an evening party you should make a point of going all round the room, after you have saluted the lady of the house, and bowing to every lady with whom you are acquainted. If, also, in any public room, or place of exhibition, you see any persons whom you know, you should go and speak to them.

If you meet ladies or gentlemen whom you do not know, at a morning visit, or a small evening party where you sit next to them, and are brought in contact with them, converse with them with the same readiness and ease as if you had known them all your life. Moreover, if in talking with one whom you are acquainted with, there are others in the group whom you do not know, you



should address them precisely on the same terms on which you speak to your friend. On such an occasion, the topics should be as impersonal as possible, but the manner should be wholly free from embarrassment. A shy or awkward demeanour towards strangers in such positions, is the certain mark of one not familiar with the great world.

If you are presented to a lady at an evening party, you should call upon her soon after.

When you receive a card of invitation, you should return an answer immediately,—in the same hour that you receive it. This is a point of conduct which good-breeding, good feeling, good sense, and good morals seem to unite in enforcing, and yet it is often violated. It is at once an instinct of kindness, and in some degree a moral duty, to let the person who has been so courteous in the offer of hospitality, know at the earliest possible moment how many people may be expected to come, that the arrangements may

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be made accordingly; and the withholding of replies till a late period, often occasions the most grievous embarrassment and inconvenience to the entertainer. Moreover, reason and the sense of the thing, require that when a request is made to you, you should respond promptly, one way or the other; just as when a verbal question is put, the reply should follow instantly. The only excuse which any one could give for not sending an immediate answer would be that the servants were not at leisure to carry it;—a most vulgar and plebeian excuse! as if the servants of a gentleman or lady were not always at leisure to do what their employer wished. It is to be understood that people of quality keep attendants enough to meet all the exigencies of life. Attention to this point always has been and will be a test of the real refinement of a person; but I trust the time will soon come when society will settle the practice so authoritatively that no one having any pretensions to good standing can with

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safety venture to delay an answer to an invitation.

If a lady accepts an invitation, nothing but the most cogent necessity amounting to an absolute prevention, should be permitted to interfere with her keeping her word. To decline at a late period, after having accepted, is, I believe, invariably felt to be a rudeness and an insult; and it will be resented in some civil way.

A young gentleman should always accept the invitation of a lady, whether he is intending to go or not; unless absence from town, or illness, or some such matter will prevent his going, and then the reason should be stated in the note. It is so much a matter of custom or of course for young men to accept, that a bare refusal would excite surprise. If you do not go, you should call the next morning and leave your card by way of apology. If the party is large, there is no very imperative duty upon you to go, though it is certainly more proper and gentlemanlike to

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do so, after accepting. If the party is small, and your presence would be important, it would be rude, and it would do you an injury with the mistress of the house, not to appear after having promised to do so.

At an evening party, a gentleman should abstain from conversing with the members of the family at whose house the company are assembled, as they wish to be occupied with entertaining their other guests. A well-bred man will do all that he can in assisting the lady of the house to render the evening pleasant. He will avoid talking to men, and will devote himself entirely to the women, and especially to those who are not much attended to by others. He will exert himself to amuse the company as much as possible, and to give animation and interest to the occasion. Such efforts are always observed and appreciated by the hostess, and win her regard and esteem; while an opposite conduct rarely fails to excite something like resentment. To

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show that you take an interest in the success of her party, and to do all that you can to promote it, will give her a great deal of pleasure. —

There is an uncourtly fault often committed in company, yet perhaps, in all cases, arising from thoughtlessness rather than from rudeness,—that of remarking to the hostess that the room is very warm, or that the weather is so bad as to render the ride to her house extremely disagreeable. Such remarks, it is true, may convey no direct reproach upon her, because the matters are beyond her control, or against her intention; yet they make her feel uncomfortably for having been the occasion of the suffering complained of, and she will always be obliged to apologize or express her regret. It is bad taste in the hostess, likewise, to talk about such things, and to anticipate observation by excuses and regrets. Entire silence should be preserved as to such matters.

At an evening party, never put a tea-cup, wine-

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glass, glass of water, or cup of lemonade, back upon the same waiter from which you took it. That waiter will be handed to others, and it will be disagreeable to them to survey an array of half-empty cups and glasses, and perhaps inconvenient to distinguish which are fresh and which have been used. Another waiter, in every respectable house, follows the first one for the purpose of receiving cups and glasses with which persons have done, and upon it alone should they be placed.

When the servants are engaged in handing tea or doing any other special service, you should not withdraw any one of them from that duty by sending them from the room for anything else,—as for a glass of water or piece of ice. This is particularly important at a small party, where there are few servants, and where their absence will be more inconvenient.

When you send a book to a gentleman or lady, as a gift or loan, or return one which you have

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borrowed, you should enclose it in white paper under seal. Never keep a borrowed book long. do not write in it even if you write as well as S. T. C., and do not mark it with your pencil in any way.

I do not know any small matter which is more often the source of annoyance and inconvenience, though always kindly intended, than the habit of sending books to people to read, because the lender thinks that the other will be entertained. It compels persons to read what they may not have leisure or inclination to do, and to prepare an opinion which they may find it difficult or unpleasant to express, and it throws upon them a responsibility, which they may find onerous, of taking care of the work. When books are spoken of, therefore, it is more refined not to make an offer of lending them. At all events, you should not press their acceptance, or send them unless your offer is accepted readily and willingly. It is better, in all cases, simply to say that you

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have such a work, which is very much at the service of the other.

Civilities always merit acknowledgment; trivial and personal ones by word; greater and more distant ones by letter. If a man sends you his book, or pays any other similar compliment, you should express your consideration of his courtesy, by a note. If you have been received with interest and kindness during an absence from home, you owe it to those who have entertained you, to inform them of your safe return, and to thank them for their hospitality or attentions.

In leaving your card at a hotel, you should enclose it in an envelope and direct it. The remissness of servants at public places in this country is so great, that there is no other method by which your visit will reach the knowledge of the party for whom it is intended. If you leave a card for a friend who is staying at the house of a person whom you do not visit, it is offensive



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and vulgar to give it a written designation for the person for whom it is intended,—as by inscribing upon it, “For Mr. So-and-So.” The amount of that is, to say to the master of the house, “Take notice, Sir, that no portion of this civility is intended to reach you.” Either leave a single card without any writing upon it, or if your relation to the host is not such as to present a decided objection to it, leave a card for each party.

Presents made to friends, should consist of articles likely to be often in view and in use, so that they may frequently and agreeably bring the giver to memory,—as for example, diamonds or snuff-boxes. Avoid, particularly, making a present of any cumbrous thing, difficult to dispose of or employ. Such a gift, instead of exciting gratitude, will only cause you to be laughed at for your awkwardness. I have often seen costly but tactless donations that drew from the obliged party no other remark than the frequent one of, “Poor Mr. So-and-So! he meant it very kindly,

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but his gift is a great plague." and the unlucky article which was intended to cement esteem, has continued to irritate and fret the receiver, till courage has been summoned to throw it into the alley.

If a person in conversation has begun to say something, and has checked himself, you should avoid the tactless error so often committed, of insisting on hearing him. Doubtless there was some reason for his change of intention, and it may make him feel unpleasantly to urge him forward according to his first impulse. In like manner, if a person has been interrupted in some remark, or prevented in attempting one, and when having opportunity to speak, evinces no desire to repeat his intended observation, you ought not to lay any compulsion upon him to do so. In all probability, the remark he designed to make, was of a trifling sort not worthy to be uttered under circumstances of so much attention, as you create for it by calling for its repetition; or it may have

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been of a kind, proper to the time when it was first offered, but not adapted to that after-moment at which you call for it. In such cases, if you have been the hinderer, it is better simply and calmly to apologize, and then give place for him to speak if he wishes to; but not by word or manner to force him to speak. It is to be supposed that every one has courage enough to say what he wants to, without being drawn upon the stage; and if the remark would do the speaker credit, depend upon it he will give it to you of his own accord.

In meeting a friend whom you have not seen for some time, and of the state and history of whose family you have not been recently or particularly informed, you should avoid making enquiries or allusions in respect to particular individuals of his family, until you have possessed yourself of knowledge respecting them. Some may be dead; others may have misbehaved, separated themselves, or fallen under some dis-

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tressing calamity. Enquire after his family generally, and that will give him an opportunity to say what he thinks proper, and from his manner you will learn whether there is anything wrong.

If a man should incautiously ask you about a member of your family who is dead, or of whom from any other cause you do not wish to speak, you should reply, "My family, I thank you, are all well," and change the subject. Your manner may indicate whatever you wish him to know, and if he possesses a particle of tact, he will fly immediately from the point. We have all of us very often seen cases of distressing embarrassment arise from an enquiry being heedlessly made about one who is dead; and yet I think the fault of that distress lies really upon the person to whom the question is put. After the question has been put, it is in his power and his only, to prevent the distress and cure the error.

There are many cases of disaster, accident, and illness, in which it is better not to make any

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enquiries, or express regret or sympathy. This applies when there is anything ridiculous or mortifying connected with the evil, and when the malady implies anything like inferiority or shame, and when it is of a sort that the sufferer would rather it were forgotten and not thought of. On all such occasions, take no notice of the indisposition or misfortune, and treat the person as if he were entirely well.

In passing a lady in the street, who is accompanied by a gentleman on the outside, there is the same reason for your taking the inside that there would be for you to walk on that side if you were with them. You should take that side, then, unless you would pay the gentleman, if he were alone, the compliment of giving him the walk.

When you salute a lady, or a gentleman to whom you wish to show particular respect, in the street, you should take your hat entirely off, and cause it to describe a circle of at least ninety

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degrees from its original resting-place. The inferior classes of men, as you may see if you think fit to take notice of them, only press the rim of their hat when they speak to women of their acquaintance.

If there is any man whom you wish to conciliate, you should make a point of taking off your hat to him as often as you meet him. People are always gratified by respect, and they generally conceive a good opinion of the understanding of one who appreciates their excellence, so much as to respect it. Such is the irresistible effect of an habitual display of this kind of manner, that perseverance in it will often conquer enmity and obliterate contempt.

If you are giving a person sugar upon a plate of fruit, as strawberries, pine-apples, or such matters, you should not scatter it over the article to which it is to be added, but should place it at the side of the plate by itself, which will enable the person to use as much as may be desirable.

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In like manner, at dinner, in helping another to gravy, you should avoid putting it upon anything that is on the plate, and should lay it upon a part of the plate that is unoccupied.

When you receive a letter of business, you should answer it immediately, provided the subject be not one that requires delay. You may be certain that your correspondent is wishing to hear from you as soon as possible, and for you to put off the reply to wait your own convenience, and to resolve that you will not gratify his desire till to-morrow, when you might just as well do it to-day, is assuredly any-thing but courteous. Promptness and punctuality, even in the lightest affairs, give evidence of *character*, and impart an interest and spirit to all occasions of intercourse. Who does not feel that the real greatness, even of the Duke of Wellington, is increased by his known invariable practice of replying to every communication by letter, the moment it is received?

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If you see a person in mourning, you should not take any notice of that circumstance in his presence, or let him see that you have observed it; and you should abstain from all question on the point, and expressions of regret, surprise or sympathy. That is a rule often violated by thoughtless persons; but a moment's consideration will show that the feelings of the individual may be such as to render any allusion to the subject of his grief very painful to him. In his absence, enquiries may be made from others. It is scarcely needful to suggest that when a man is in mourning, and you do not know for whom, you should avoid asking after any of his friends, until you have informed yourself upon that point.

- If, in walking, you meet a friend, accompanied by one whom you do not know, speak to both. Also, if you are walking with a friend who speaks to a friend whom you are not acquainted with, you should speak to the person; and with as much respect and ease as if you knew the



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party. If you meet a man whom you have met frequently before, who knows your name, and whose name you know, it is polite to salute him.

If you meet or join or are visited by a person who has a book or box, or any article whatever, under his arm or in his hand, and he does not offer to show it to you, you should not, even if he be your most intimate friend, take it from him and look at it. There may be many reasons why he would not like you to see it, or be obliged to answer the enquiries or give the explanations connected with it. That intrusive curiosity is very inconsistent with the delicacy of a well-bred man, and always offends in some degree.

In walking, the hand should not be closed or clenched. In your ordinary progress, you have no occasion for a fist. A gentleman wishes to meet the world with an expanded palm. The arms should hang easily, by the side; and that cannot be effected when the hand is clenched. Moreover, the figure is more slightly when the

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and terminates in a point. A gentleman should entertain as much horror of a *string*, as a highwayman does.

If you have paid a compliment to one man, or have used towards him any expression of particular civility, you should not show the same conduct to any other person in his presence. For example, if a gentleman comes to your house and you tell him with warmth and interest that you 'are glad to see him,' he will be pleased with the attention, and will probably thank you, but if he hears you say the same thing to twenty other people, he will not only perceive that your courtesy was worth nothing, but he will feel some resentment at having been imposed on. To treat all the world with indiscriminating respect, and the same shows of affluence, does less good than to treat every one with coldness, for it begets a reputation of insincerity.

It is in bad *ton* for a newly-married couple, when going to an evening party, to enter the

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room together. Some older person, or some relative of hers, should take the bride in. It is in better taste that, on all occasions of appearing in public, the pair should not be exactly together. The recognition of that relation should as much as possible be confined to the fireside. It is not pleasant to see persons thrusting their mutual devotedness into the eye of society.

When music is introduced at a party, the playing should either be by professional persons, or by some members of the family at whose house the company are. It is not delicate to invite any of the guests to go to the piano, and to tax their efforts for the entertainment of the circle.

If a stranger from another city calls to see you, or you meet him by accident, it is not tactful to ask him how long he has been in town. There may be many reasons why he may not wish to have that known. He may have been in town for several days, and may be unwilling to confess

that he has waited so long without coming to see you.

If you call to see a stranger who is staying at the house of another person, you should not in the presence of his host, ask him how long he intends to remain. His stay may be dependent on the invitation he expects to receive, or on other grounds he may be disinclined to announce the intended length of his visit.

It is generally better to say "I hope you are well," or, "I hope that such a one is well," than to ask a question on the subject. This, however, is only applicable to those cases in which you are so well acquainted with the parties, and are in a condition to know of their health so frequently, that one could not long have been sick without your hearing of it. If you have not recently heard much of the party of whom you speak, it is better to ask directly and with an air of interest, how he is, for he may have been out of health for some time, and you would not

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gratify his friend or relative by showing that you had known nothing of his state for so long a period.

If you dine with another, and there is any dish particularly nice upon the table, and which the entertainer must regard with peculiar complacency, it is an act of great rudeness to decline taking any of it. Natural humanity and conventional good-breeding unite in requiring the guests to show that they partake, in the fullest degree, of the gratification which has been provided for them. That affectation which leads some persons to decline the best things on the table and confine themselves to plain and common things, is little better than brutal. It mortifies and disgusts the host incalculably. A man of decent good<sup>n</sup> feeling, or of tolerable courtesy, will make a point of selecting the most *recherché* dishes, and using them copiously. He will feel certain that he gives more pleasure to his Amphitryon

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by appearing to enjoy his viands, than by leaving them for his own enjoyment.

There are many dishes to which you should help yourself with your fingers, and not employ a fork or spoon. It would be ridiculous, for example, to take cherries with a spoon. If a lady asks you to help her to an article of that sort, you should give her a plate, and then hand her the dish that she may help herself.

If you are driving in company with another who holds the reins, you should most carefully abstain from even the slightest interference, by word or act, with the province of the driver. Any comment, advice, or gesture of control, implies a reproof which is very offensive. If there be any point of imminent danger, where you think his conduct wrong, you may suggest a change, but it must be done with great delicacy and must be prefaced by an apology. During the ordinary course of the drive, you should resign yourself wholly to his control, and be entirely passive.

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If you do not approve of his manner, or have not confidence in his skill, you need not drive with him again; but while you are with him, you should yield implicitly.

At a house where you are intimate, you may drop in and take tea without being invited; but it is otherwise with dinner. We are told that Boileau, who had a very delicate and correct sense of honour, recommended it as a rule, which he himself always practised, never to dine with even one's most intimate friends without being invited in particular. The maxim is worthy of close adoption.

At dinner, there should not be much conversation during the first course, while the meats are receiving attention. At least, during that season the remarks which are made should be brief, and quiet, and not upon earnest or exciting topics. Long stories should be avoided, for the listeners have other organs than the ear, which they are wishing to exercise at that time. At a later

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part of the entertainment, discourse is agreeable. There was reason in the complaint of a noted Parisian epicure that talking spoilt his dinner, and upon whom this epigram was made :

Gomor, étant à table avec certains pédants,  
Qui criaient et prêchaient trop haut sur la vendange,  
Lui qui ne songe alors qu'à ce que font ses dents,  
Pais la, pais la, dit-il on ne sait ce qu'on mange

If you are at a small party where tea is made in the room, you should not enter into conversation with the lady who presides at the table, and you should not draw your chair close to her. She has need of all her attention in arranging and preparing the tea-waiters, and she also requires room for her arms.

In company, you should never tilt your chair back upon its hind feet; especially not at a dinner-table.





# TITLE IV.

## OF BEHAVIOUR ON PARTICULAR OCCASIONS.

- A gentleman of excellent breeding, of great admittance, generally allowed for his many warlike courtlike and learned preparations - SHAKESPEARE *Hen. IV*

To coincide with the humour of the company, which you are in, and to do as others do, is a rule which it is generally safe, and sometimes indispensable, to follow. On some occasions it may be proper or necessary to differ. Care, however, should always be taken to differ in such a way that your course may not convey an uncourteous reproof to those from whose practice you dissent. For example, if at a dinner-party, you were to pass the decanter without filling your glass, when others were drinking freely,

you would express something like a rebuke to those around you, and would render your company less agreeable: to do so at your own table would be a positive rudeness.

A man should be able to accommodate himself to every grade of persons and every class of customs and doings. If thrown into company with the gay, and even the intemperate and dissolute, he should appear to be one of them, and so attune himself with them that no difference should be visible. This variety and adaptation are necessary to the complete character of a gentleman and man of the world; and, as many cases, that I have witnessed, prove, is perfectly consistent with purity and soundness of morals. "Let him be able to do everything," says Montaigne, "but let him love to do nothing but what is good." That bigotry of deportment which can be but one and uniform under every condition and circumstance, is as inelegant as injurious. Let a man educate himself into an abhorrence of every-

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thing licentious, intemperate and gross, but let him not think the accomplishment of his manner complete, until he can ~~act~~ <sup>cut</sup> those parts, if occasion require, thoroughly and successfully. Of course, occasions requiring such displays are to be avoided as much as possible; but every one who mingles much with the world or has extensive dealings with men, is liable to be thrown among coarse and irregular persons whom he is obliged to conciliate, and who will laugh him to scorn if he carries with him into their company the narrow cockneyism of a refined and fastidious man and style. Let a man go to a county court or a state legislature, or among bankers, or brokers, or aldermen, in short, into any rank of society beneath the highest, and he will be distanced very speedily and thrown *hors du combat*; where he can drink and roar and talk roughly. Sir Robert Walpole cultivated very diligently the art of gross conversation, and if his contemporaries may be credited, attained it in an eminent degree;

and the reason he gave was, that everybody could talk in that strain and liked to talk so; and of the classes of businessmen with whom he was chiefly conversant, this was no doubt true. Lord Byron was once staying with Lord Jersey in the country, and on account of indigestion, or perhaps from a mere freak of fastidiousness, he remained in his room during dinner; but hearing that some persons below ridiculed his effeminacy, he went down after the cloth was removed, and drank half the company under the table. None have ever justified Callisthenes for forfeiting the favour of his master, Alexander the Great, by refusing the wine-cup. "Let a man laugh, play, and drink with his prince," says Montaigne; "nay, I would have him even in his debauches too hard for the rest of the company, and to excel his companions in ability and vigour, and that he may not give over doing it, either through defect of power or knowledge how to do it, but for want of will. *Multum interest, utram peccare quis*

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‘nolit, aut nesciat.’ (SEN) I thought I passed a compliment upon a lord, as free from those excesses as any man in France, by asking him before a great deal of very good company, how many times he had been drunk in Germany, in the time of his being there about his Majesty’s affairs; which he also took as it was intended, and made answer, three times; and withal, told us the whole story of his debauches. I know some, who for want of this faculty, have found a great inconvenience by it in negotiating with that nation. I have often with great admiration reflected upon the wonderful constitution of Alcibiades, who so easily could transform himself to so various fashions without any prejudice to his health; one while outdoing the Persian pomp and luxury; and another, the Lacedemonian austerity and frugality; as reformed in Sparta as voluptuous in Ionia;

OMNIS Aristippum decussit color, et status, et res  
I would have my pupil to be such a one.”

This principle of the good *Sieur de Perigord* should not perhaps be carried quite so far as it was by the Honourable *William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley*, the nephew of the Duke of Wellington, who told *Dr Southcote* "that he considered it the principal branch of his children's education, that they should know how, if necessary, to make themselves perfect blackguards; it being his wish that they should know how to enter into and associate with the lowest and most vulgar society, without the persons with whom they should associate being able to discern that they were the children of a gentleman, or gentlemen themselves." This eccentric patrician often expressed to the tutors of his family, his particular wish and desire that his children should adopt the language and manners of the lower classes, in order that they might obtain a knowledge of the world; and he acted in conformity with this theory. He often boasted

to his friends "that, while residing in Paris, he had frequently procured children of the lowest description to come to the back of his house, to teach his children to learn and repeat the oaths and indecent language made use of by such blackguards; and that, in return for the oaths so taught them in the French language, he made his boys teach those low children to swear in English; and he declared that when he had the government of his children, he would take care that they should be present at bull-baits, cock-fights, dog-fights, and all other sports of the like nature, in order to afford them an opportunity of hearing and learning the oaths employed by people usually attending such sports, which were manly sports and ought to be pursued by his children in preference to any other." Lord Eldon, not entertaining precisely the same views with the Hon. Mr. Wellesley, on the subject of education, took his children from him and placed them in the hands of other guardians.



It is a delicate and acceptable flattery, when a man is doing anything at which he feels a little uneasy or ashamed, for another to do the same and even go beyond him in the practice. This was well understood at Versailles in the time of Louis XIV. When that monarch, in his old age and under the tuition of Maintenon, was led to an excess of dévotion, his courtiers rivalled all his bigotry, and some of them would take the sacrament twice a day. Richelieu was wont, after the close application of hours to state affairs, to divert himself by leaping about his chamber with great violence and activity, and as much secrecy as possible. One day, the elder De Grammont, who, having married one of his nieces, had free access to him at all times, found him jumping with great vehemence in his gallery. The intruder, who was a thorough courtier, began himself to leap, and challenged his lordship to a trial of skill in that exercise. The Cardinal understood the delicate courtesy of De

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Grammont, and ever after showed him many strong proofs of his attachment.

There are a great many cases in which a man is neglected or another is preferred, when one might take offence and resent the slight; but it is generally wiser, as a matter of reason, and more refined, as a point of good-breeding, to pass the thing by with indifference, and acquiesce in it as a thing to be regretted but not helped. When there is no intention to insult, but the offence proceeds from a real preference for another, or a sincere want of esteem for himself, no wise man, however much he may be mortified, will exhibit irritation or pique. Henry IV. of France once paid a private and unexpected visit to the fair Gabrielle, at a time when the Duke of Belle Garde was with her. The Duke retreated precipitately under the lady's bed, and she received the king as if no one had been with her. Henry had seen the Duke creep under the bed, but taking no notice of it, behaved in the most

cordial and pleasant manner. A cold collation was served, and Henry as he helped himself, cut off the leg of a chicken, and throwing it under the table, said with great good humour, "Every one must live." Neither the Duke nor the lady ever offended again.

To get money from a man who owes it to you and won't pay it is a nice matter, and certainly a very important one. If you were to ask directly for it, you would give deadly offence, and probably receive a challenge. It is necessary, therefore, to resort to some indirect mode of request, and, if possible, to throw something humorous into your style, which will repel anger. Talbot, afterwards Earl of Tyrconnel, a courtier of Charles the Second, was in the habit of playing deep with Grammont, and owed him three or four hundred guineas one evening when he was sent to the Tower. That little accident made him forget his usual punctuality in paying the next morning what he had lost over night, and it so

completely effaced his recollection of the thing, that he never again thought of it. Grammont took leave of him as he was going to France, and wished him a good journey, without Talbot's taking any notice of the debt. After some farther compliments, "Adieu!" said Grammont, "God bless you! be sure not to fall sick upon the road; but if you should, pray remember me in your will." Talbot burst out a laughing, and recollecting the debt, immediately sent it to him.

If a hit has been made against you, or a piece of ridicule fixed upon you, which you cannot reply to or obviate, the only way is to make no resistance, but to join in the laugh. Ridicule never yet hurt any man who did not show that he was hurt. I believe that we enjoy ridicule only in proportion to the annoyance it gives to the person aimed at. It is that annoyance which diverts us, rather than the ridicule itself. Lamb once wrote a farce, and when the representation took place, he and his sister seated themselves

in the pit. At the beginning of the performance, they clapped, applauded and laughed, at the top of their power. But when the house grew dissatisfied, and it became apparent that the farce would be 'damned,' Lamb and his sister turned about, and hissed and hooted with the utmost vehemence, and were by far the most indignant of all the spectators. By that act, Lamb escaped the railleury of his friends during the rest of his life.

Menage never showed his good sense more strikingly than by his behaviour on the appearance of Moliere's "*Femmes Savantes*," in which he was satirized under the name of Valrus. The quarrel between that personage and Trissotin, in the play, was founded on a real dispute between Menage and Cotin at Madame Rambouillet's, whose house Moliere used to frequent till the sarcasms of those two drove him away in offence. On returning from the performance of the play, Madame Rambouillet, said to Menage with great

indignation, "What! will you suffer this fellow to expose us to ridicule in this way?" "Madam," replied Menage, "we had better be profoundly silent; the play is above criticism, and the representation is perfectly true."

At a time when Frederick the Great was issuing some oppressive edicts in support of his coffee monopoly, a humorous print was published, which represented him sitting on the ground with a coffee-mill between his hands, grinding away with great perseverance. As the king was riding through the streets of Berlin, he perceived a crowd assembled round the place where one of these prints was exhibited: he immediately rode up and desired the tradesman to "hang it lower, that the people might not break their necks with staring at it." He was recognized, and saluted immediately with the loudest applause.

Lord North, who possessed a large share of the same good sense, was one day passing a

print-shop, in the window of which a caricature of himself was hanging, and not having seen it before, he stopped to look at it. Being recognized in this position, he was surrounded by a number of persons, before he was aware of it; when, retiring from the window, he said to the crowd, with a smile, "Very like, is it not?"

When one is compelled to give up to another, from inferior power or the disadvantage of position, there is a mode of yielding which is so prompt and graceful as to take from submission all its dishonour. As any one is liable to be brought at some time into that situation, this is a tactic worth studying and practising. It is said that Count Grammont, who had been in some sort engaged to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Hamilton, went off suddenly to France without providing for the fulfilment of his promises. Count George Hamilton immediately followed, and overtaking him at Dover, thus addressed him, "My dear friend, I believe you have forgot a

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circumstance which was to take place before your return to France." De Grammont immediately replied, "True, my dear friend; what a memory I have! I quite forgot that I was to marry your sister; but I will instantly accompany you back to London, and rectify that forgetfulness."\* This does not seem to have abated in the least Count Hamilton's lofty admiration of De Grammont, for in the most charming biography that any language can boast, he assigns him every virtue that can adorn a cavalier.

The responsibility that rests upon the seconds in a duel, is very great, and should be seriously regarded by every one whom circumstances place in that unfortunate position. The seconds may always prevent a duel from taking effect, and they always ought to. They should be astute

\* I give this anecdote on the authority of Walpole, though there are some circumstances which appear to render it very improbable. It is related by the authors of the *Biographia Britannica*, but I forget whom they cite for it.



in inventing forms of apology and explanation which may satisfy one party without committing the honour of the other. It is idle to say that the parties cannot be reconciled, and that nothing will conquer their determination to meet. Out of Ireland, no man has that recklessness of life, and out of hell, no man that malignity of temper, which will overcome the natural earnest wish of every one to escape that risk, if it can be done consistently with reputation. Something may always be contrived by which both may retire with flying colours. At all events, certain unconquerable impediments, founded on the honour of the principals, may always be interposed by the seconds to prevent the encounter from occurring.

The parties themselves, in the absence of skilful conduct on the part of their supporters, have often practised on these principles with great success. An Italian and a Frenchman happened both to have a bull's head in their coats of arms,

and accordingly accused each other of mutual usurpations in their quarterings. A challenge followed from the Frenchman, and the persons met. When they were on the point of engaging, the Italian lowered his sword, and begged leave, with an air of curiosity, to enquire the cause of their quarrel. "It is because you assume my arms," said the Frenchman. "If that is all," replied the Italian, "you are mistaken, your arms bear a bull's head, and mine a cow's." The disputants parted without farther controversy.

To agree promptly to a proposal, in general, and to negative it by particular difficulties in carrying it into effect, is one of the most finished tricks of diplomacy. It has often saved at once the honour and the life of royal and princely challengers. An amusing instance of it occurred in the case of a message which passed between Akenside the poet, and one Ballow, a lawyer and a wit. No apology could be obtained in any

shape, and the demand of it would not be foregone. But a meeting was avoided by a resolution from which neither would depart, that one would not fight in the morning, nor the other in the afternoon.

When a person goes to visit curious places, or voyages into other countries, or falls among particularly instructive people, he should make it his business to gather all the information which circumstances will permit him to elicit, and to lay it up for use in general and mixed company, "I observe in all my travels," says Montaigne, "this custom, ever to learn something from the information of those with whom I confer (which is the best school of all others), and to put my company upon those subjects they are best able to speak of." Every one, by his profession or the accidents of his life, is peculiarly fitted to discourse upon some particular topics.

*Navita de ventis, de lauris narrat arator,*

*Ememorat miles vulnera, pastor oves* PROP.

On the contrary, vanity often prompts men to talk of what they know nothing about, to those persons who from their course of business must know it thoroughly, instead of listening to them and gratifying them while they instruct themselves. Such men incur the censure which Archidamus passed on Periander, "That he had quitted the glory of being an excellent physician to gain the repute of a very bad poet." The true art both of improvement and of courtesy is, to put people upon talking of that with which they are known to be most familiar. These remarks apply only to those occasional encounters which are out of the ordinary conditions of the drawing-room. On the platform of general society, where you meet a man simply *en gentleman*, you are to lay aside all recollection of such peculiarities, to merge the professional in the general character, and to treat persons as if they were equally conversant with every branch

of knowledge. We must, of course, except those cases where there is a manifest desire to display a particular 'hobby.' Every one who approached Mr. Fiskine felt it his duty, I believe, to talk about trial by jury.

The conferring of a benefit is an act that requires great skill and care. To most men, the acceptance of an advantage carries with it so instinctive a sense of inferiority, that if the deed be accompanied by a haughty or contemptuous manner, it will certainly provoke a smothered resentment. Count Hamilton remarks of De Grammont, who was generous even to extravagance, that "his manner of conferring a favour, exceeded even the favour itself." An air of indifference, and the tone of a man who seems unconscious that he has done a kindness, are necessary to give full effect to liberality. If there be apparent, a design to extort gratitude, it will inevitably excite disgust and hatred.

## TITLE V.

### CONVERSATION

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The world is nothing but babble — MONTAIGNE

CONVERSATION is the field to which a man of sense instinctively resorts for his best displays and noblest triumphs; it is that on which the pretensions of a fool are most certain to be detected. As long as the exhibition is confined to manner, "many a blockhead," as Sir Fopling expresses it, "varnished over with good-breeding, makes a tolerable show," and if that philosopher was right who refused to pronounce upon the happiness of a man until he was dead, we should with equal propriety answer to any enquiry about the abilities of a stranger, "wait till he has spoken." Whatever may be the impor-

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tance of manner and of exterior, he who converses the best, will always be the most-admired and the most successful. "When we have taken our best pains about the outside," says Lady Easy, "'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting value."

The fashionable talk that prevails at balls and parties, is, to be sure, a frivolous thing enough. To give any suggestions for its conduct would be to define the limits of a summer cloud, or to analyze its colours which are changing while we gaze. We may ask now, as it was asked a century ago in the "Careless Husband," "What's half the conversation of most of the fine young people about town but a perpetual affectation of appearing foremost in the knowledge of manners, new modes, and scandal?" We may apply to it the language in which Scaliger described the style of Ramus, "a river of words and a drop of intellect." It is vain to hope for any improvement in this matter; this mode is sustained by

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persons whose understandings cannot reach to anything better,—whose minds are “a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through the most fanned and winnowed opinions” and through none other. This fashionable, drawing-room chat, is of a sort resembling that described by Gellius —“*ecum orationem bene existimatum est in ore nasci, non in pectore*”—it is born upon the lips and not within the breast. *Leves, et futiles, et importuni locutores, quique nullo rerum pondere innixi verbis humidis et lapsantibus diffluent;* light orators, who on the current of a soft and fluent loquacity, float along, unfreighted with the weight of thoughts.

But even among the gayest people of mode there is room, at certain seasons, for a better style, and among well-bred men of sense and dignity, the conversation that usually prevails is of a kind to require high talents and deep cultivation. An admirable passage in St. Evremond happily sets forth, in brief, most of the consi-



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derations needful to be regarded by a converser. "In this kind of commerce," says he, "with our equals and inferiors, we should use an easiness of address, obliging manners, a ready and respectful attention to what they utter, and avoid a display of superiority, either of our talents or acquisitions; which caution will defend us from the hate and envy of those with whom we associate. Those among whom we use expressions of inattention and contempt, or pronounce sentiments with too much warmth and predilection, will either avoid us, or seek occasion to injure us by secret acts of malevolence, excited by painful feelings of inferiority. Such is the nature of man. On the contrary, when we assume no airs of importance, those who know our capacities, and those who are made acquainted with them afterwards, esteem our acquaintance more, and view our talents at a higher rate, than if we had endeavoured to blazon them ourselves. To gain the good-will of those with whom we converse,

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the infallible method is, to be the cause of their displaying the acquisitions which they possess, and to keep our own back. Self-love, here, is gratified in every speaker: and he values us as the means of making himself more conspicuous and important."

Avoid opposition and argument in conversation. Rarely controvert opinions; never contradict sentiments. The expression of a feeling should be received as a fact which is not the subject of confutation. Those who wrangle in company render themselves odious by disturbing the equanimity of their companion, and compelling him to defend and give a reason for his opinion, when perhaps he is neither capable nor inclined to do it. What would be thought of the courtesy of the person who should say to one who had just made a remark, "Now, Sir, I will show you that you are a fool, and that the observation which you have uttered, is nonsense" ? Yet that is the amount of attacking what another

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has said, and applying yourself to confute it. If your companion has been so ill-bred as to assail your remark directly, you should not defend it, but receive his assault in silence, and presently pass on to something else. Of course, this does not apply to a case where two friends, alone, are discussing a subject for the sake of truth.

Opposite to this, lies the stupid fault of always acquiescing in what another says, and adopting that opinion not only as the truth, but as the whole truth upon the subject. It is very annoying to feel that you are conversing with one who has no mental identity, and whose fungus-like thoughts have no existence save as they cling to your mind. We feel ourselves degraded by the nearness of a thing so pitiable. It was well said by Chevreau that there were two classes of men whose conversation was equally disagreeable; those who always contradicted and disputed what you said; and those who agreed and assented so humbly and yieldingly that one felt

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inclined to cry out with the enraged orator to his quiet antagonist, "Do contradict me, to prove that we are two persons."

In conversation, taste is worth more than talent. The ability to employ power well, is the best sort of power. We meet with hundreds of men, who if they showed half their wit and genius better disposed and put, would go for a great deal more than they do. The manner of exhibition is as much to be studied as the matter which is to be exhibited, for full as much depends on it. We encounter many in relation to whom we feel what Quintilian says of Seneca, "*velles cum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno judicio*,"—would that he used his own genius with another's judgment. Not to display too much is as important as to have enough. That which

- - - Fatigues the ring,  
Flaunts, and goes down an unregarded thing.

There are many persons whose conversational

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ment might be likened to an onion, which becomes greater, the more you take away.

In conversation, a well-bred man should employ learning, as Cicero says that metaphors should be used, which he likens to virgins, that should exhibit themselves sparingly and with reserve, but should appear without any affectation. Much learning can scarcely be displayed in any manner without the charge of pedantry. Yet a *certain* degree of knowledge is convenient in every station. A courtier presented Sir Matthew Dekker to King George the Second, as the distinguished author of St. Matthew's gospel.

Men who tell stories briefly and well, are generally liked. But to tell nothing else than stories, as many do, is not only likely to be tiresome, but to be offensive. A professional *raconteur* is in danger of wounding the self-love of his auditors, who do not like to be shadowed and silenced by a man who produces nothing from his own mind, and who conquers by no superior display of in-

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tellect, but by a mere trick of memory. That character is more agreeable in one, who by age, or distinction vindicated in some other field, is an admitted superior, than in one who is the equal and rival of all the company. Menage, whose reading was various and whose memory was immense, was one day entertaining some ladies with a variety of stories which he had picked out of books. After he had gone on for some time, Madame Rambouillet, who was familiar with this method of conversation on his part, suddenly called out, "This is all very fine, Sir, but give us now immediately something of your own invention." The famous Segrais had this habit so strongly that some one said of him that he only wanted winding up, in order to go for a fortnight.

Place and time should be carefully considered in judging of the fitness of relating anecdotes. There are many seasons at which it is wholly unbecoming. At a large evening party it should be entirely avoided. The demands on manner

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are at such times so constant and quickly-changing, that the attention ought not to be fixed for any length of time; and people are all so animated and excited that they want to talk and look, and not listen. For the same reason, long discourses and harangues are to be avoided at such scenes. In a *tete-à-tete*, or an evening visit, or after dinner, pleasant stories are pleasing; but still, even then, reference is to be had to the tone and humour of the company. - If persons are in a brisk mood and want to talk, you will not gratify them by compelling them to listen; if they are dull and inclined to be taciturn, they will be glad to be relieved from the labour of conversing.

The minute circumstantiality of those narrators who exhibit every particular of an event, with the truth and tastelessness of a Chinese representation, is excessively annoying. The salient mirth of the audience is eager to pounce upon the point of the story; and the stupid details that

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keep them back, let them as much as the leash chafes the grey-hound when the hare is in sight. This accuracy is one of the superstitions of age. The old deal with the commonest incidents as the rabbins did with the language of Scripture, giving to every word and letter the significance of a divine oracle; or as the Augustin monks were wont to dwell on the minutest explicatives of style in the Evangelist, as if they were the most important parts of the narration. One of this fraternity, discoursing on that passage where it is said that the servants of the High Priest warmed themselves, addressed his audience with great solemnity in these words: "My brethren, ye are to notice that the Evangelist is not content to mention this circumstance merely as an historian would, by the words '*calefaciebant se*,' they warmed themselves; but adds, in the spirit of a philosopher, '*quia frigus erat*,' because it was cold." It was said of Pliny's account of his villas, that it was written with as



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much minuteness of detail as if Pliny had intended to put them up to sale. This auctioneer style of description may often be met with among the aged.

The narrator of a story should keep a keen eye upon his company, and proportionally shorten his details according to the temper of unconscious or acquiescence which he perceives them display. An orator, during the troubles of the league in France, began a discourse with he said he would divide into thirteen heads, but perceiving a murmur of dissent among his audience at this fearful announcement he immediately continued with great readiness of mind, "I shall at present, however, omit thirteen of them."

Some persons have an awkward habit of repeating the most striking parts of a story, especially the main point, if it has taken greatly the first time. This is in very bad taste, and always excites disgust. In most cases, the story pleased the first time, only because it was unexpected.

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One of the first virtues of conversation is to be perspicuous and intelligible. Those quaint and affected constructions, and high flown, bookish phrases, in which some indulge, to the embarrassment of those they talk to, are in bad taste and should be avoided. There have indeed at times appeared writers and schools of rhetoric who cultivated obscurity as a merit. Lycophron publicly declared that he would hang himself if any one was found who could understand his poem of *Cassandria*. A man of good sense will always make a point of using the plainest and simplest word that will convey his meaning, and will bear in mind that his principal or only business is to lodge his idea in the mind of his hearer. The same remark applies to distinctness of articulation and Hannah More has justly observed that to speak so that people can hear you is one of the minor virtues.

Those who have generosity enough to care for the feelings of others, or self-regard enough to

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covet good-will, will be careful to avoid every display of wit which wounds another. It is a happy circumstance for the honour of our nature, and one very characteristic of the kindness of Providence, that a display of the easiest moral virtues will generally bring us more popularity than the exhibition of the greatest talents without them.

FORTH may be praised good nature is adored,  
Then draw your wit as well as your sword  
And never on the weak

Those who scatter brilliant jokes without caring whom they wound, are as unwise as they are unkind. Those sharp little sarcasms that bear a sting in their words, rankle long, sometimes forever, in the mind, and fester often into a fatal hatred never to be healed.

Hæreticæ fidei catholice fundo -- VIRE

If from among the various anecdotes that are told, illustrative of the manners of Louis XIV., we were to select that which places his claim to

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thorough breeding and refinement on the highest eminence of certainty, we should choose a story that is thus related by one of the best historians of his country. The king one day entertained a party of his courtiers with the relation of a circumstance which he had announced as extremely laughable, but on the entrance of Prince Armaignac, he suppressed a fine repartee, which constituted the merit of the story. The whole circle felt themselves disappointed, which was seldom the case when his majesty promised their entertainment, and were therefore surprised. The king observed it, but said nothing till the prince departed. "Now, gentlemen, I'll make you laugh," said he, and accordingly gave them the anecdote unmitigated, which produced in a high degree, the proposed effect. "You see," subjoined Louis, "there was an oblique stroke that would have affected the prince, and I suppressed it, to prevent his being embarrassed; for I would rather lose the reputation of the best *bon mot* that

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was ever uttered, than give a moment's pain to any individual."

To avoid wounding the feelings of another, is the key to almost every problem of manners that can be proposed, and he who will always regulate his sayings and doings by that principle, may chance to break some conventional rule, but will rarely violate any of the essentials of good breeding. Judgment and attention are as necessary to fulfil this precept, as the disposition, for, by inadvertence or folly, as much pain may be given as by designed malevolence. An instance of this occurred when the beautiful but silly Countess of Coventry was talking to George the Second, towards the close of that monarch's reign, about shows, and remarked that the sight which she was most anxious to see was a coronation.

That temper which is termed absence of mind often leads very amiable men to do unconsciously what the boldest malice would not dare. [Bishop

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Burnet, who was one of the most *distrust* men in England, was invited to dine with Prince Eugene soon after his arrival in England; and his host, knowing the bishop's humour, exhorted him to abstain very carefully from any allusion to the family disasters of the distinguished foreigner, and the bishop thereupon discreetly resolved to hold his tongue altogether during the repast. The prince, however, who had heard of Burnet, asked him how long it was since he had been in France. The Doctor, somewhat embarrassed by being obliged to deviate from the rule he had appointed for himself, replied, hurriedly, that he was in France in the same year that the Countess of Soissons was unprisoned for poisoning a person. The Countess, it will be remembered, was the Prince's mother.

The same divine one day dining with his patroness, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, compared the Duke who had been deprived of his places by the Court, to Belisarius. The Duchess

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asked what was the principal cause of the downfall of the latter. "Ah, madam," replied Burnet, "he had such a brimstone of a wife!" The appropriateness of this remark to Pope's *Mosses* may readily be conceived.

There are many persons, and they are chiefly to be found among elderly unmarried women whose breasts are full of the gall of inhuman bitterness, who not only disregard wholly that attention to the feelings of others which we have spoken of, but who appear to think that malice and rudeness are the best or only wit. There are many writers and talkers whose whole staple of wit is malevolence, and Boileau happily disclosed the distinction which separated legitimate satire from mere abuse, when he replied to some one who remarked that Racine was his equal in satire, "You should rather have said that he is my superior in malice." That accomplished poet, whose temper was as amiable as his pen was keen, elegantly described the pleasant and

affable discourse which he used, by saying that it had neither claws nor talons,\* It is that style which a well-bred man should endeavour to attain.

When you are in one company, you should avoid exclusive panegyrics of others, or eulogies of the pleasantness of other places, times, or people. That always implies some contempt or dislike of those you are with; and it is apt to give great offence. A Frenchman often lamented his first wife in the presence of his second, who at length said to him with a most pardonable and natural severity, “*Monsieur, je vous assure qu’il n’y a personne qui la regrette plus que moi*.”

Vanity is a most offensive thing in conversation, for many reasons, one of which is well stated by Walpole,—“because it wounds one’s own vanity.” But of the various sorts which

\* Very opposite is the manner of that large class who constitute

• The would-be wits and can’t be gentlemen — BRERRO



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life displays, perhaps the cant and vanity of authorship is the most disgusting. Every one whose fate it has been to be at all "dipped in ink,"—and in this age and country, authorial honours are as life as civic ones,—should be most carefully on his guard to banish from his manner and talk, all traces of the pen. In this matter, as in many others, Scott was a great model. It was said of Swift, who abhorred the cant of religion, that one might have lived under the same roof with him for a month without discovering that he ever said his prayers, and it is equally certain that one might have resided a year with Scott, without guessing that he had ever written a book. It was very accurately observed of Byron and Scott, that the former detested and the latter despised, the cant of authorship.

There are some ludicrous anecdotes told of the vanity of small geniuses in various countries. Santen], in France, who wrote moderate poetry,

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which has long since gone to its place, used to say when he had finished any favourite piece, "Now I will go, and put chains all along the bridges of the town, to prevent my brother bards from drowning themselves." Dennis once wrote a play called "Liberty Assured," which became popular on account of the virulent abuse of the French nation with which it abounded, and the author thought it was of such political consequence, that Louis XIV. would certainly stipulate, whenever peace was to be concluded, that the writer should be delivered up to his resentment. Under this apprehension he applied to the Duke of Marlborough for his good offices when the treaty of Utrecht was in agitation. The Duke very gravely told him that his interest with the persons then in the ministry was small, but that he hoped the danger was not so great as he imagined, for that he himself had made no application for security in the articles of peace, and yet he could not help thinking that he had done the

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French king almost as much harm as Mr. Dennis had done.

The same author being once on a visit to a friend who lived on the coast of Sussex, saw a ship making towards the land. Taking it into his head that this was a French vessel coming to seize him, he exclaimed, that he was betrayed, and instantly made the best of his way to London, without taking leave of his host. Might we not conjecture that if the tears which occasioned the precipitate flight of a distinguished modern English poet from Italy, to escape the wrath of Napoleon, were not wholly suggested by similar vanity, they were at least largely exaggerated by such a quality ? \*

The vanity of intimating that others value you highly, or esteem you affectionately, is extremely paltry and absurd. To let it be known that a dis-

\* See the *Biographia Literaria* for Coleridge's own statement of the affair, and Colt's "Recollections of Coleridge" for the more detailed account of the escape.

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tinguished man asked their opinion on a certain point, or expressed such an opinion as to their character or abilities, is a favourite mode of self-puffing among shallow parasites; but as everybody sees that they themselves pull the puppets which thus pay them homage, it generally goes for nothing. You have such a contempt for the character of a man who descends to that littleness, that you do not hesitate to pronounce him a liar, to boot. A fanatic in Germany once went to the expense of having a plate engraved, in which he was represented kneeling before a crucifix, with a label from his mouth, "Lord Jesus, do you love me?" and from the mouth of Jesus proceeded another label, "Yes, most illustrious, most excellent, and most learned Sigcrus, crowned poet of his Imperial Majesty, and most worthy rector of the University of Wittenberg, yes, I love you."

Whatever may be your company, always talk your best, and endeavour as far as is in your

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power, to conciliate and please ~~those~~ who are near you. Dr. Johnson, who was admitted to have been six years the best talker in England, said that he had attained his proficiency by resolving in early life always to speak in the most correct and elegant form of words which he could construct, and never to utter anything in a negligent or slovenly style. Strive to gain the good opinion of those around you, but do not value that opinion too highly. Much of the awkwardness and nervousness of young persons, and many of their failures, proceed from their feeling too high a respect for others, and too much deference to their presence. Exhibit outward respect to those whom you wish to gain; but in your own mind, fear no man. Hold yourself equal to any man and to anything; accustom yourself to scrutinize and confute the opinions of others, in order that you may have confidence when you are with them. Attach as great a value as you please to the remarks of others, as truths, but little to

them as opinions. Venerate no man's intellect; worship no man's understanding. Appreciate their power; but do not bow before their minds.

A gentleman should always carry a certain sincerity and truth into his compliments and even his lightest flattery. He owes it as well to the dignity of his understanding, as to his moral principle, not to indulge in the habitual use of language that is senseless or false. Many persons in society appear to look upon the language of compluient as a style of phrase beyond the considerations of reason and morality. Such persons remind one of the shepherd described by an Italian writer, as living in a part of the country in the kingdom of Naples which was greatly infested with robbers and murderers. At confession, he acknowledged with much sorrow and contrition, that once on a fast-day he had drunk some drops of milk. "Does your conscience upbraid you with no other wickedness?" said the confessor. "None," replied the penitent.

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"Did you never join any of your countrymen in robbing and murdering passengers?" "O yes! very often, good father!" said the other; "but we do not look upon that as a matter of conscience."

On the other hand, those run into an opposite and equally faulty extreme who oppose conscience to every form of words which leaves truth in quest of courtesy. Erroneously conceiving that all is false that is not literal, they refuse to deviate from preciseness, whatever may be the compulsion of politeness or pleasure. We debate no question of morals with these people, for we are as devoted advocates of *truth* as they are; it is a mistake of judgment which we charge upon them. A man may quit exactness without leaving truth, and he may adhere to it without gaining truth. "The vice of lying," says St. Evremond, "does not consist properly in its opposition to fact. We may say many things which are not facts without incurring the guilt and

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fringe of a lie. Compliments are white lies; and not only permitted, but enforced by custom. Such modes of speech are not considered in their literal sense; but as forms of civility. 'The vice of lying really consists in conveying a false idea.'

Readiness in contriving, and grace in offering, compliments, are talents very necessary to be had by a man of the world. If he is disinclined to practise them merely for rendering himself agreeable, and for gratifying harmlessly those whom he frequents, he should have them at command for parrying unpleasant attacks and questions, and turning aside disagreeable subjects of conversation. Very often, an onset, prompted by ill-will or wantonness, is made upon one, or enquiries of a sort which are not asked, are directed, and no other method of shunning the inconvenience can be found, than to give the discourse a turn highly flattering to the party proposing it. A lady attacked the Siamese ambassador at the



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French court, on account of the people of his nation having so many wives, while those of her own had but one. "Madam," he replied, "could we find in our country, any one woman of the beauty, graces and intelligence of your ladyship, we also should never have more than one wife."

The use of epithets is an accurate test of good sense and of good-breeding. A profusion of them, and of strong ones particularly, is a vice in style; and a defective style always argues a defective mind. To select and apply them well is proof of a discriminating intellect. Coleridge used to tell a story of his standing near a waterfall among the Alps, and looking at it in silence, while a Londoner whom he did not know, was engaged in the same occupation. After some time, the stranger turned towards him, and said, "how majestic it is!" The poet laid his hand upon his shoulder; "My friend," said he, "you have employed the word which is of all others

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the most appropriate." "Yes," cried the cockney, gratified by a commendation which he did not understand. "yes, it is really beautiful!" . . . Scaliger said that he once heard a man who saw the ocean for the first time, pronounce it "a pretty thing."

But however reason may be involved in the use of such words, violent adjectives are decidedly in bad *ton*. The expressions, "elegant," "splendid," "noble," &c., doubtless have a fitness to certain subjects, and in certain places and times; but in society their use can rarely be consistent with perfectly good taste. The safest word is *good*. That is the most frequent word in the circles of high fashion; it is almost always appropriate, and it is particularly consistent with that composure and calmness which characterize distinguished breeding. At present, the colloquial language of England is, in the department of adjectives, pretty nearly reduced to *good* for things, and *nice* for persons.

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In conveying sentiments and impressions, a vast deal depends on the choice of words. There is a suggestiveness of good or ill in words whose direct sense does not involve matter of feeling at all. They have a meaning side-ways, as well as directly. The Arabians have an anecdote illustrative of this. The caliph Abu Almansur sent for two astrologers to cast his horoscope. The first, being admitted, went through a good deal of jugglery, and concluded by saying that all the caliph's rivals would *die* before him. The caliph dismissed him without recompense. The other, coming in and going through similar tricks, said that the caliph would *outlive* all other aspirants to the caliphate. He was sent away richly rewarded.

As an illustration of what we mean, a gentleman, if he had occasion to notice any defect or inferiority, in a matter of any delicacy, would say that the thing in question was "less excel-

lent" or "less becoming," and not that it was "more unbecoming" or "more disagreeable."

Some persons have a plebeian rage of conversing and being seen to converse with people of eminence,—like the low fellow who boasted that the king had spoken to him; and being asked what his majesty had said, replied, "He bade me stand out of his way." There are *parvenus* who will put up with a great deal of contempt, and will even run the risk of offending the person concerned, in order to be observed walking half a square or talking intimately with some one of distinction in fashion or politics.

When a man goes into company, he should leave behind him all professional peculiarities of mind and manners. That, indeed, constituted Dr. Johnson's notion of a gentleman; and as far as negatives go, the notion was correct. It is in bad taste, particularly, to employ technical or professional terms in general conversation. Young physicians and lawyers often commit that error.

The most eminent members of those occupations are the most free from it; for the reason, that the most eminent have the most sense.

The improvising of quotations, or at least authorities, is often practised by unscrupulous people in conversation. If a man produces such a sham sentence or opinion against you in an argument, you cannot very well tell him that he lies; the best thing, therefore, for you to do is to tell your friend that if he had read on a little farther he would have found that his author restricted the remark that was cited, to something not involved in that debate; or to improvise something precisely the reverse of his quotation, and if asked for the exact place whence the passage was taken, to say that it was on the next page to his quotation.

Young men often, through real modesty, put forth their remarks in the form of personal opinions; as, with the introduction of, "I think so-and-so," or, "Now, I, for my part, have found it

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otherwise." This is generally prompted by humility; and yet it has always an air of arrogance. The persons who employ such phrases, mean to shrink from affirming a fact into expressing a notion, but are taken to be designing to extend an opinion into an affirmance of a fact.

The *weather* is a topic of conversation against which wit has often been directed. Yet it forms, on many occasions, as harmless and as entertaining a subject of remark, as almost any other that is used. At those times, and in the chronicle of society they are not unfrequent, when people talk, confessedly, only for talk's sake, a matter so completely impersonal, and so wholly free from the possibility of offence, certainly possesses a strong recommendation. We have Johnson's own confession that his notorious intolerance of that topic proceeded chiefly from the vanity of an intellect that scorned so barren and so trite a subject. In one of the latest letters which he wrote to Mrs. Thrale, in the midst of age and illness,

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he says, "I am at length reduced to talk about the weather; pride must have its fall." In his brighter days of ever-ready wisdom, he was not wont to be familiar with those predicaments of society whose exigencies, alone, constitute the sufficient apology for such a style. Walpole defends the atmosphere upon broader ground. "To talk of the weather is sometimes ridiculed," says he: "but not wisely, for the weather is so important that our health and bread depend upon it. The existence of numerous classes of persons depends on the weather, and it is idle to deny that the spirits of all men are affected by the clouds. The stoutest man cannot take exercise on a rainy day, and must feel *ennui* because he cannot divide his time as usual."

We remarked in a former page, that a gentleman should be fitted to cope all sorts and classes of men, and that he should possess those accomplishments which are required for dealing with the lowest and rudest as well as the most courtly.

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Swearing is one of those ornaments of character, which he is ignorant of the world who has never known, and of refinement who has often practised. On this principle, Christina, queen of Sweden, who did not like to be ignorant of anything, chose Peter Bourdelot, a physician and a man of wit, at her court, to be her master in swearing, he being reckoned the most expert man of his time in this sort of ejaculation; and she took regular lessons and exercises, until she had attained as great proficiency as her distinguished rival on the throne of England. The Honourable William Pole Tylney Long Wellesley, whose peculiar notions of education we have already alluded to, considered swearing as the best remedy against lying, and ordered his children to cultivate it for that purpose. He wrote to his wife from Paris, respecting one of his daughters, “for correcting the faults of the little girl I would recommend to you something similar to the course I adopted with William, when I found



that he had a slight propensity to lying, the parent of all evil. You remember, I allowed him to swear, in order to establish in his mind the distinction between a vice and a venial fault." He directed his children to swear when they were in a passion, as the best outlet and relief. Others, it would seem, have been of a similar opinion. Boileau one day met the servant of a friend of his who was often tormented with the gout, and asked how he was. The man replied that his master had had a severe recurrence of his old malady. "He swears a good deal then," observed Boileau, who knew that his temper was quick. "O yes, Sir," said the valet with great simplicity, "it is the only comfort my poor master has in his illness." Thurlow, it would appear, improved this his constitutional vice into a similar advantage. He once had an attack of the gout while he was staying at an inn, in the country. A fellow-lodger who occupied an adjoining room, subsequently met Thurlow's bro-

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ther who was a bishop, and told him that he was happy to find that the Chancellor had become a pious man, and that he sought for comfort in the only quarter where it could be found. The prelate bent his head towards the ground, and said he was obliged to confess that that part of his brother's character was not what he could wish it to be. "Indeed," said the other, "I think you are mistaken. I recently lodged in the same house with him when he was severely attacked by gout, and I can testify that he did nothing but call on the name of God and Jesus during the whole of his illness." But whatever may have been Thurlow's performances in that kind, they never came up to those of his predecessor on the woolsack, Henley, Lord Northington.

Henry IV. of France, when he swore, generally used the exclamation, "Ventre St. Gris!" and the word greatly puzzled his courtiers, who had not before heard of that saint. The origin

of this habit of the king's was, that some of his pious guardians during his youth, fearing that he might fall into the fashion of those times, which were greatly given to profane and blasphemous oaths, permitted the young prince to employ the words "Ventre St. Gris" in his moments of passion, as expressions that signified nothing at all.

Those who think, with Sir Fepling, "that swearing and gaming are vices too gentle for a boeinaker," and are inclined to rescue this noble practice from the profanation of scavengers and table-boys, should, however, be very careful at their selection of oaths is of a refined description, for there is a fashion in this matter as others, and some ejaculations are as vulgar as others are polite. Byron has pronounced "amine" to be "Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing," and has elsewhere declared "G—n" to be "the nucleus of England's native uence." Great as are the claims of those professions, I do not know whether they could

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maintain their ground against certain other phrases more in vogue.

A gentleman should never permit any phrase that approaches to an oath, to escape his lips in the presence of a lady. If any man employs a profane expression in the drawing-room, his pretensions to good-breeding are gone for ever. The same reason extends to the society of men advanced in life; and he would be singularly defective in good taste, who should swear before old persons, however irreligious their own habits might be. The cause of profanity being offensive in these cases is that it denotes an entire absence of reverence and respect from the spirit of him who uses it.

"A dearth of words," says Young,

"A woman need not fear,  
But 'tis a task, indeed, to learn to *hear*  
In *that*, the skill of conversation lies,  
That shows or makes you both polite and wise."

Listening is not only a point of good-breeding and the best kind of flattery, but it is a method

of acquiring information which no man of judgment will neglect. "This is a common vice in conversation," says Montaigne, "that instead of gathering observations from others, we make it our whole business to lay ourselves open to them, and are more concerned how to expose and set out our own commodities, than how to increase our stock by acquiring new. Silence, therefore, and modesty, are very advantageous qualities in conversation." But if a person gets knowledge in this way from another, he should always give him due credit for it; and not endeavour to sustain himself in society upon the claims that really belong to another. "It is a special trick of low cunning," says Walpole, with a very natural indignation, "to squeeze out knowledge from a modest man, who is eminent in any science; and then to use it as legally acquired, and pass the source in total silence."

That conversation is the best which furnishes the most entertainment to the person conferred

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with, and calls upon him for the least exercise of mind. It is for this reason that argument and difference are studiously avoided by well-bred people; they tax and tire. It should be the aim of every one to utter his remarks in such a form that the expression of assent or opposition need not follow from him he speaks with. The interjection of such phrases as, "You know," "You see," "Don't you see?" "Do you understand?" and similar ones that stimulate the attention, and demand an answer, ought to be avoided. Make your observations in a calm and sedate way, which your companion may attend to or not, as he pleases, and let them go for what they are worth.

That style of language which society pronounces vulgar, and which grammarians call impure, arises less from the use of new and unauthorized words, than from the employment of old words in the wrong senses. For example, the word 'guess,' when properly applied, is a good

English word, it becomes vulgar only in its misappropriation. Use it a hundred times a-day in its right sense, and you are a gentleman; use it once improperly, and you declare yourself a Yankee.

Some variation has grown up in late years between England and America in the employment of particular words. In certain cases, England is right, in certain others, America is nearer correctness. For example, in the use of the word 'clever,' the Americans are justified by the colloquial sense of the word for a long series of years in the best age of British speech; the English application of it to literary talent is a modern cockneyism. On the other hand, the word 'fine' as applied to persons, signifies properly a kind of dignified beauty, and does not belong to the expression of moral qualities. Any one who will look into the dramatists and essayists from the time of Charles II. to the close of that of Queen

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Anne, will find that a "fine woman" invariably meant a handsome one.

One must never permit the accidental and conventional distinctions of rank, or even the more interior considerations of refined manners and cultivated taste, to control one's estimate of the understanding, judgment and knowledge of persons with whom one meets. While we must ascend into the loftiest heights to look for elegance and delicacy, it will often happen that we must go to low points and through obscure passages to find wisdom and sense. Young men, newly introduced to the regions of gay society, so much overrate the value of the forms and shows there brought before their eyes, that they are apt to despise every man whose dress and manner indicate that his life is alien to that scene; and they will settle the pretensions of a great but uncourtly philosopher, with, "Poh! he is a low fellow; one never meets him in good company." It is necessary to purge the mind



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from such paltry estimates of human worth, and to learn to respect intellect and learning under the rudest garb and in the lowest station. "I have been present," says Montaigne, "when they at the upper end of the chamber have been only commending the beauty of the arras, or the flavour of the wine, whilst many things that have been very finely said, have been lost and thrown away, at the lower end of the table."

There are few points in which men are more frequently deceived than in the estimate which they form of the confidence and secrecy of those to whom they make communications. People constantly make statements of delicacy and importance which they expect will go no farther and will never be repeated; but the number of those who regard the obligation of silence even as to the most particular affairs, is extremely small. How few are those who will hesitate to divulge in the most unrestrained manner whatever they know relating to the condition of their

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closest friends, though the utterance may involve character and fortune very deeply ! Lord Bolingbroke used to say, " what is known to women is known to the world ;" and in this matter, as in many others, the mass of men have all the weakness of women. Every one who would avoid the serious consequences of the most common treachery, should make it an unalterable rule of conduct, never to repeat to any man that which he is not willing should be told to all mankind.

Cautiousness, and the check of an habitual self-control, should accompany the mind of every one who launches out in animated conversation. When the fancy is heated, and the tongue has become restless through exercise, and there is either a single listener or a circle, to reward display, nothing but resolute self-recollection can prevent the utterance of much that had better been left unsaid. A watchful eye and an attentive ear are more profitable organs than a rapid tongue. When you enter the society of profes-

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sional diplomatists, you are struck by nothing more than the paucity of their own observations, and the constant keen attention which they give to all that falls from others. No man conversed better than Canning, and yet in society it was his constant effort to set other people to talking and thus to find out all their thoughts. Cromwell, in an earlier age, and Burr, more lately in our own country, practised the same art with great skill; and the remarks of Talleyrand in mixed society, at least when we have seen him in later life, were extremely few, and singularly cautious. We have no intention of recommending this vice of cautious watchfulness; we quote the practice of these extraordinary men to show wherein the most common danger of speech consists; and while one should be far from following this art to the injury of others, all may prudently guard against others' exercise of it to their own injury. That same reserve will enlarge the stores of

knowledge, while it will save one from the betrayal of ignorance.

Young men, fresh from their books, are apt to fancy that there is no other description of talent than literary, and to treat with contempt those who can present no proof of understanding save that which is apart from literature. This is so far from being true, that unquestionably the highest order of intellect is that which looks at things, directly, without what Young has termed "the spectacles of books;" and which has derived its culture from action and not from solitary meditation. The man of fashion will protest against that criterion of sense, as well as the man of business. "Our peevish poets, damn 'em," says Sir Fopling, "will allow no man wit who does not play the fool like themselves, and show it." Christopher North has said that all men are poets except those that write verses; and if any one will pass from the society of authors and men of letters, to the company of merchants,

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Politicians and lawyers, he will be tempted to conclude that all men are wise except those who write books.

A brazen boldness in appealing to men, and readiness in managing those feelings and applying those principles under which men act when they act together, and which constitute the power of cant, are the surest elements of success. The arts which form a popular man may be summed up in a line of Virgil

*Æt cetero viros multoque accendere cantu*

Cant, in its largest and most philosophical sense, may be defined, a prevailing of the sentiment or opinion of a *coterie*, class, time, or nation, over the sincere and individual conclusions of the understanding. By far the larger portion of mankind are controlled in their opinions and actions by these popular and talk-sustained notions; they feel certain of their conclusions only when they can refer them to some one of these principles.

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The judicious management of these elements of influence, and a skill in arguing from some decision of cant, to the point which it is wished to prove, constitute the chief power of the demagogue, and are the arts of those writers who become the idols of their own age, and whose fallacies the next century is engaged in unravelling.

The world is at present, to use Falstaff's phrase, so "given to lying," that a man of sincerity and truth, will deceive and surprise the men he deals with, as much as the man of falsehood and trick. There is therefore little gained by a departure from frankness and veracity. An instance of this is the story of Cesar and the pirates. A still more striking case occurred in the life of the great Spanish captain, Spínola, one of the three persons whom De Retz said were born generals. When he passed through Paris, in 1601, he was invited to sup with Henry the Fourth. Towards the end of the entertain-

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ment, the king asked him what particular operations he meant to pursue in the next campaign, and Spinola gave him a faithful relation of his intentions, telling him how and when he would begin, where he would construct a bridge on the Scheldt to lead over his army, and where he proposed to erect a small fort. In a word, he did not omit the minutest particular. Henry, who was interested for the Dutch, immediately wrote to the prince of Orange, an account of what he had heard, telling him that he must take everything in a quite contrary sense, as it was not probable that Spinola, who had no confidence in him, would disclose his real designs. That able general, however, did precisely everything he had said. He had been free with Henry, because he knew the monarch would not believe him. The king afterwards used to say, "others deceive me by speaking falsehood, but Spinola deceived me by speaking the truth."

It is not by long and copious harangues, or the

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display of profound theories of refinement, or by eloquent and sonorous sentences, that accomplishment of mind is to be shown in society. It is by a careful choice of words, and a frame of speech denoting high polish of taste and great maturity in use of language, that culture should be exhibited. Refinement of education is seen as much in what one does not say or do, as in what one does utter or perform. "That slight delicacy, which finishes while it seems but to sketch,"\* is the result of which every gentleman should aim in speech. Every one should avoid displaying his mind and principles and character entirely, but should let his remarks only open glimpses to his understanding. For women this precept is still more important. They are like moss-roses, and are most beautiful in spirit and in intellect, when they are but half-unfolded.

Naked in nothing should a woman be,  
But veil her very wit with modesty,  
Let man discover, let not her display,  
But yield her charms of mind with sweet delay

\*WALPOLE. 'Royal and Noble Authors'





## TITLE VI.

### WOMEN, -- COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Our humbler province is to tend the fan,  
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care . . .  
POPE.

In point of fact, women certainly constitute the most general consideration in life, in point of necessity, perhaps the most important one. In every age and country, they occupy vastly the larger portion of men's thoughts. The class of common men dedicate to them their lives; and to ambition, business, or amusement, they are but the truant's of an hour. The boy dreams of them as the ministers of a delight, dnn but delicious, inexplicable but immense; the man thinks of them as the authors of a pleasure, placid yet poignant; the old turn towards them

## WOMEN, COCKLE-HOP AND MARITAL

as the source of that comfort which is the only paradise of the world in the favour of justice, whose attractions are so universal and so various, must be admitted to be an art that is worth some attention.

Anciently, talismans and charms were relied on for procuring love, "but it is now many years," says Count Hamilton, "since the only talismans for creating love are the charms of the person beloved." By gracefully displaying those advantages which nature has given, and by diligently cultivating the graces which art can bestow, every man may reasonably hope to succeed in whatever aspirations he may form in this direction. In this field, moral qualities prevail far more than physical, and while few men are possessed of those attractions of form and face which sometimes are successful, all may hope to acquire those qualifications of character, under-

standing and man is, which in re often win the esteem of women

A woman's common judgment upon this matter has been accurately expressed by Cibber when he places in a woman's mouth, the remark, that "the only merit of a man is his sense, while doubtless the greatest value of a woman is her beauty." Beauty, unquestionably, is the master-charm of that sex, and it is felt to be so by themselves. But while we observe its value, we cannot but ponder on its danger. Their glory is so often their ruin, that what they make their boast were better called their curse. There is a fatal truth in the remark of Mirabeau,—"*les avantages naturels, sans doute, et quoiqu'en diso vulgairement, sont beaucoup plus precieux pour un homme que pour une femme, qu'ils vont presque toujours au malheur*."

Most hard in pleasing their chief glory lies  
And yet from pleasing their chief dangers rise

A woman always values the reputation of

beauty more than any other thing. On that side she is susceptible to the most conciliation and to the greatest anger. A compliment, on that point, is never forgotten; an offence, in that quarter is never forgiven. There was an accurate notion of the female character and mind possessed by that man spoken of by Walpole, who being called on to reconcile two of his female relations who had quarrelled, enquired, "Have they called one another ugly?" "No." "Then I shall soon make them friends again."

Beauty is the prescriptive attribute of that sex, as fragrance is the glory of a flower. In conversation with them, then inalienable title to it must never be forgotten; if they have it not in reality, they must possess it by intendment of courtesy. As "Serenity" is the only recognized condition of those princes who in matter of fact are probably the most passionate and stormy of the human kind, so fairness is the appellation of every woman. No other ascription of virtues

can make up for its denial. There is no woman who is not offended by a compliment paid to her talent at the expense of her beauty, and none who is pleased by one paid to the neglect of her beauty. The highest favour you can do any woman living, is to extol her appearance. Doubtless, if the greatest female genius were to choose a form among the Muses which she would be, she would prefer Ptole, whose name was derived from her beauty.

By showing a woman that you feel the influence of her beauty, you gain an influence over her which nothing else can possibly give you. She may be insensible to admiration which has any other direction, but she cannot choose but feel an appeal to that point. Tell a woman that she is lovely, fascinating, graceful and charming, and she listens to you with coldness, but tell her that she is beautiful, and you have reached her heart. Through that avenue, your presence enters to her inmost spirit, and prevails. For

beauty is essentially spiritual, and it is the name of all that is spiritual, and spirit is but substantiated beauty, and there is a sympathy and a connexion between spirit and beauty: for they are one.

One meets occasionally with women so admirable for lofty virtues, or respectable for sound discretion, that one feels in one's own mind, that the appreciation of such qualities is more truly valuable than the applause of softer merits; but few women will think the same. The strongest and most majestic character among them would rather be loved than venerated. It has justly been observed that most women will forgive a liberty sooner than a slight. They will always pardon and generally cherish the admiration which is more warm than delicate. They are more pleased with sincerity than offended at ardour. A striking proof of this was furnished in the case of Elizabeth of England, a person to have given it confutation, if any could confute

it. When she once gave audience to some deputies from the States General of Holland, a young man, belonging to the suite, on seeing the queen, expressed, in very licentious terms, his admiration of her personal charms. The ladies-in-waiting, exhibiting great offence at the indelicacy, the queen insisted on knowing what had been said; and so far from being offended at the indecorum of his language, she was pleased with its animation. When the ambassadors were dismissed, each was presented with a chain of gold worth eight hundred crowns; but the gallant who had found the queen so handsome, received a chain worth sixteen hundred crowns, which he ever afterwards wore around his neck. The woman had overcome the queen.

Every one in his intercourse with women should establish in his feelings and manner, a clear distinction between courtesy and courtship. From the want of a clear dividing line, men often pass from one to the other before they are



## WOMEN.—COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

aware of it, and quite against their intentions. "We often proceed farther than we at first designed," says Count Anthony Hamilton, "when we indulge ourselves in trifling liberties, which we think of no consequence; for though the heart perhaps takes no part at the beginning, it seldom fails to be engaged in the end." A man owes both to himself and the lady he deals with, to be strictly on guard in conversation and manner, where his intentions are not serious, never to go beyond the boundary which separates the polite from the particular, the gallant from the lover. Women take advantage of every opportunity they can get to convert an acquaintance into an 'admirer,' and they so often go beyond what is fair and true that it is necessary for a man who is not anxious to bear that title, sometimes to exercise a good deal of care. "All the sex feel an unspeakable satisfaction," said a courtier of the last century, "at having men in their train, whom they care not for, and to use

them as their slaves of state, merely to swell their equipage."\* And when the season is over, and it is time to be established, they expect to select from the throng, whomsoever they think most eligible. We should distinguish between a position that is chosen by ourselves, and one that is forced upon us; and we should resist the latter. There are few connexions, I believe, which either in their inception or their consummation, are wholly voluntary upon both sides; and that is one reason that so few of them are happy. It seems particularly necessary to regulate the attention and devotion that are paid to ladies, in this country; for, unlike the state of

\* It is persons of grave character and understanding who are most often the subjects of this kind of slavery. They have too much respect for the sex to see their actual principles or to deal with them in the proper way. "Men of sense, my dear," says Lady Betty Mounshu, "make the best fools in the world, their sincerity and good breeding throw them so entirely into one's power, and give one so agreeable a thirst of using them ill, — 'tis impossible not to quench it."

things in Europe the subjects of flirtation here are unmarried women —

A man may safely lay down to himself the rule that it is not prudent to push forward, or suffer to be drawn forward, to an actual engagement, an intimacy with any woman who has not appeared, in the cool and dispassionate moments of previous reflection, to be a proper and desirable connexion. Marriage, it should be remembered, is a relation that is to last for life, and that hallucination of the fancy, which is called ‘Love,’ is not very likely to last quite so long. “Love gilds us over,” says Etherege, “and makes us show fine things to one another for a time, but soon the gold wears off and then the native brass appears.” We should take care, therefore, that the substantial metal which will be found beneath the glitter, shall prove something better than brass. To form a matrimonial arrangement merely on the footing of convenience, and to trust that familiarity and fre-

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quency will develop an affection that will make it tolerable, is certainly anything but wise. A connection that is not delightful at first, will soon be disgusting. "Marrying to increase love," says Wycherley, "is like gaming to become rich; Alas! you only lose what little you had before."

Some then consult their ears on the subject of marriage, and take a wife by hearing. Others consult their eyes, and marry hearing, well, says Lord Foppington, "that a fine woman is an excuse for anything." A third class consult their fingers, and find the attraction of their mistress in proportion to her thousands. While there is another sect who think, with Miss Hobart, that "the pleasures of matrimony are so trifling, in comparison with its inconveniences, that it is impossible to imagine how any reasonable creature can resolve upon it at all." It is difficult to tell which of these various parties is the farthest from reason. To abstain wholly from marriage,

and live in solitude of heart, is to contradict the plainest and most compulsory instincts of nature. The "strong necessity of loving" will compel men to find some object for their passion; and if it flow not through this channel, it will lead to guilt, and guilt will lead to wretchedness. To marry merely for fortune, is to take an estate so heavily encumbered as to have its clear value reduced almost to zero. On the other hand, wholly to neglect that consideration, is as little consistent with right reason. "Love makes but a slovenly figure in the house, when poverty keeps the door." The only excuse that can be given by him that weds for beauty, will be found in the hope that the passion which concupiscence has excited may attach so permanently to the object it belongs to, that the decline of the cause may not sweep off the effect. But there is more danger that when "the hey day in the blood is tame," the lover will become indignant at the quackery by which he has been imposed upon.

Intellect in a wife is a consideration which cannot be wholly overlooked; if she has it, the husband may be compelled to respect her too much; if she has it not, to respect himself too little. One of Wychetley's characters remarks, "Tis my maxim—He's a fool that marries; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool."

If a man shall have settled all these difficulties in his own mind, and have determined upon the propriety of wooing in some particular direction, let him be persuaded that boldness and confidence are the only requisites for success. Let him assure himself that "Courage is the whole mystery of making love, and of more use than conduct is in war," and believe with Sir Harry Wildair, that "women are only cold as some men are brave, from the modesty or fear of those that attack them." And this remark applies to every class of women, to the gentle and the delicate as truly as to the passionate and strong.

All of them, instinctively admire bravery before every other quality in a man, and involuntarily yield to it.

Not much he knows, I woen, of woman's heart,  
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sight,  
What careth she for hearts when once possessed,  
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes,  
But not too humbly, or she will despise  
That and the rest, though told in moving trove,  
Disguise of a tenderness if thou art false,  
Black confidence still best with woman copes  
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon passion crowns thy  
hopes

He who shows himself certain of victory, and indifferent to the chances of defeat, rouses in the breast of woman, with whom vanity is still the imperial passion, a determination to make him feel the influence of her charms; and engaged in that design, her own freedom is soon lost. Women may admire and praise a sober man of sense, a refined man of modesty, or a grave man of dignity, but it is to the forward, the foppish, the self-assuming and the conceited, that they yield their hearts and hands. When

## WOMEN — COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

Matta, the companion of the Chevalier de Grammont, courted the Marchioness de Senantes, at Turin, she gave him some advice for prevailing in that art, of which this is a portion :

Poppery, primming, and grimace  
 And fertile store of common place , ,  
 And oaths as false as quercus acorn,  
 And every tooth and scented hair  
 And trinkets and the pride of dress  
 Can only give you scheme success

That passion which even but St. Paul has ever named,—‘the lust of the eye,’—is particularly strong in women, and through that they are often captivated. A brilliant exterior and a dazzling manner have an influence over them which men can scarcely realize. Handsome presents are the necessary price of the favour of many of them ; as we must lose a gilded fly to gain a trout. Many more are certain to yield to the attentions of any one who is greatly talked of by others and is often the subject of admiration in society like pigs—if so uncourtly an allusion may for an



instant be hazarded,—they are most safely caught by the ears. In an ancient collection of proverbs, attributed to Odin himself, a translation of which is given in Mr. Taylor's *Historic Survey*, we meet with this piece of counsel

Let him who woees be full of chat  
 And full of flattery and all that,\*—  
 And can procure us in his hat  
 Skill may suspect the worthier man

There is one capital error into which persons inexperienced in life are apt to fall, and which, in many instances that I have witnessed, is productive of painful and bitter disappointment. Many who dread the tyranny of a woman whose rank has accustomed her to authority, and who

\* The divine author lives up in a delightful state of ignorance as to the significance of this phrase which I suppose is intended to have all the comprehensiveness of a legal 'et cetera.' Pope's employment of the same words in the *Rape of the Lock* would indicate something very mysterious.

Snuff, if the tax supply each pause of chat,  
 With singing, laughing, ogling and all that!

dislike in a wife that independence which the possession of wealth generally produces, think that by wedding a person who is poor, and beneath them in standing, they will secure quiet to their lives, and that pleasing gratitude which the elevation is calculated to produce. No expectation proves more generally fallacious. A woman, when she is married, deems herself at once on a level with her husband, and forgets that she ever knew another sphere. If she has been poor, she will be afraid that modesty and thrift will betray her native meanness of spirit, and she will drive into an excess of extravagance and luxury to vindicate her fitness for the station she illustrates. If humble in origin, and unfamiliar through her youth with the excesses of fashion and gaiety into which she is introduced, she will quickly learn "to bear her part in all the follies of the town with as good a grace as if she had never been out of sight of Grosvenor Square." Against expectations which are thus doomed to

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certain failure there is an admirable caution in the autobiography of Sir Henry Pynes, son of the Earl of Lincoln, in 1600; a passage so charged with accurate sense and so whimsical in the earnestness of its expression, that I cannot forbear transcribing it

"It pleased God," says he, "for my sins and offences, to put thoughts into my head of marriage, which turned out my utter ruin and confusion; for I fell into an opinion not to marry any rich woman, nor any great woman, nor any widow; and flattered myself with such worldly reasons as I thought were wisdom for choice of a wife; which were these, namely, I imagined that great women or rich women would look for great jointures out of my estate, and so hurt my children, and would ask great charge to be maintained, and their great friends would cur me and overway me, and that they would brag of them and their estates, and the value of their friends, and so contemn me and not respect me. And I

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thought a meaner woman would be the contrary, and be beholden to me for raising her, and so I would live more contentedly in my cottage. But I had the wisdom of man as well with God. Therefore, I do advise my son to be wile in his marriage, as concerning worldly matters and his liking, &c. but for contentment and the disposition of humour, leave those and all things else that may happen to God who knows and guiden all, only pray for those happinesses, and avoid sins, and pray also that God may hear and give the blessing, and many as richly as he can. For a rich woman and a great woman, I find by experience, will ask as little to be maintained and give as much contentment, if she be religious and good, as the poorest and meanest; for the old proverb is true, 'Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride.'

St. Henry seems to have held the theory that those pleasures which arose from feeling depended so much on humour for their appreciation,

that he who possessed them might often be in such a mood that he could say "I would have been as happy without them:" but that the comforts of wealth were so numberable and measurable that every one could at all times feel the precise value of what he gained. In support of that view, it is to be considered that the delights which spring from sentiment dull and diminish in proportion to their use, but that those which are offered by wealth increase in their attraction and necessity, as they are more often tasted. Against this decline of interest in all matters of the heart, civilized life has provided no remedy, but a remote and very peculiar people in the East have contrived a method of escaping the evil. In Circassia, the next morning after a marriage, the husband leaves his wife at the break of day, and she goes into a new house which he has built for her, where he only sees her again at night, or with the greatest mystery,—it being considered a species of dishonour to appear in

public with one's wife. "This custom of not seeing their wives," says the intelligent and well-informed Chevalier Taubout de Marigny, "does not arise from any contempt of the Catalans for the fair sex. I think, on the contrary, that it was originally established with the view of prolonging the empire of love between the husband and wife, by the same difficulties that are experienced by lovers in obtaining possession of each other, and to which the duration of its illusion may frequently be ascribed. A similar law was given by Lycurgus, to the Lacedæmonians, a fact which might serve to prove the origin of the Abases, or rather the establishment of some colonies of the Peloponnesus upon their shores, were it not certain that many nations seem to have had singular customs from their infancy. And the Spartans themselves only differed from other Greeks in so far as they maintained themselves by means of institutions from which others have departed in proportion as they

have become more civilized." Strange! that a national usage among these remote savages should so long have anticipated a course which Mr. Bulwer recently hinted at as the last suggestion of the most fastidious refinement.

Confidence and determination, as we have already remarked, are the most essential qualities for the success of a lover. By that charm, the most vaunt caprice is fixed, and the most haughty coldness is subdued. He who can command that display in manner, may smile at the disdain behind which the most frigid beauty may entrench herself. "A woman's pride," says Lady Easby,—and perhaps the observation is applicable to all pride,— "a woman's pride at best may be suspected to be more a distrust than a real contempt of mankind." By throwing an air of deep sincerity into the earnestness of your address to such a person, the reserve which has thus been assumed will soon be melted down. It is necessary to study the peculiarities of dis-

position by which each woman's natural temper has been modified, in the course of past experiences, and to accommodate your style to suit ~~that~~ condition. I imagine the strictest moralist would not object to that ethical conclusion of which the Chevalier de Grammont was so well convinced, "that, in love, whatever is gained by address is fairly gained."

When you find that one of your friends appears to be attracted by a young lady, and to be attentive to her, you should be extremely careful how you express to him any unfavourable opinion about her, or indulge in any derogatory remarks. If he should make her his wife, the remembrance of your observations will make a constant awkwardness between you. It is still a more delicate case when a man comes to ask your advice about marrying a woman. "Men are seldom in the right when they guess at a woman's mind," says *Etherege*; and a man's mind about a woman it is often equally difficult to discover. But



when advice of that kind is asked, you may be perfectly certain that the enquirer has determined to marry, even if the matter has not gone still farther.

An anecdote in the life of the third Earl of Shaftesbury, illustrates this truth, and proves the quick sagacity of that accomplished nobleman. Sir Richard Onslow, and the Earl, then Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, were one day invited by Sir John Danvers to dine with him at Chelsea, and desired to come early, as he had an affair of moment to communicate to them. They went accordingly; and being seated, Sir John told them, that he had made choice of them both, for their known abilities and their particular friendship to him, in order to advise with them in a matter of great consequence. He had, he said, been a widower many years, and began to want somebody that might ease him of the trouble of housekeeping, and take some care of him in his old age, and for that purpose had thought of a

woman whom he had known some years. "In short," said he, "it is my housekeeper." Sir Richard Onslow, who was well acquainted with the family, and had a great regard for Sir John's children, was extremely mortified at this declaration, and began to speak of the impropriety of marrying at his years, particularly such a woman. He was proceeding to give a description of her, when Sir Anthony interrupting him, turned towards the knight, "Before we go farther, Sir John," said he, "open the door, and let in my lady!" . . . After a pause, Sir John answered, that it was true, he had been married the day before.

When Onslow afterwards asked Sir Anthony, what had given him that suggestion, "Why," said he, "the man and the manner gave me a suspicion that, having done a foolish thing, he wanted to cover himself with the authority of our advice."



## TITLE VII.

### OF MORNING CALLS

'Tis the best part of dialogue  
To humour always what the rest assert  
' And listen to the topics most in vogue,  
Now grave, now gay but never dull or peevish  
BYRON

A GENTLEMAN should pay his visits regularly, even if he does not pay his debts.

In the beginning of the season, after persons have returned from the country, and at the close of it when you are about to leave town, you should call upon all your acquaintances. It is polite and pleasant to do the same thing on New Year's day, to wish your friends the compliments of that season.

It is becoming more usual for visits of cere-

money to be performed by cards; it will be a happy day when that is universal.

The habit of calling upon a number of persons, and addressing a variety of characters readily and briefly, gives great ease and accomplishment to manner. We may converse intimately with one or two persons of distinguished breeding, and reap less profit than from exchanging a bow and three words with a dozen strangers in a morning. This intermixture with the general world, and this rapid observation of the demeanour and style of a variety of people, is a necessary exercise to one who would become "an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing." \*

If a stranger belonging to your own class of society comes to town, you should call upon him. That civility should be paid even if there be no

previous acquaintance, and it does not require the ceremony of an introduction. In going to another city, you should in general wait to be visited; but the *etiquette* is different in many European cities, and in some of those in our country.

When you call to see a person, and are informed at the door, that the party whom you ask for, is engaged, you should never persist in your attempt to be admitted, but should acquiesce at once in that arrangement which the other has made for his convenience, to protect himself from interruption. However intimate you may be in any house, you have no right nor reason, when an order has been given to exclude general visitors, and no exception has been made of you, to violate that exclusion and declare that the party shall be at home to you. I have known several persons who have had the habit of forcing an entrance into a house, after having been thus forbidden; but whatever has been the degree

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of intimacy, I never knew it done without giving an offence bordering on disgust. There are many times and seasons at which a person chooses to be entirely alone, and when there is no friendship for which he would give up his occupation or his solitude.

It is now usual for those who do not wish to see company, to send word that "they are engaged," formerly, that message would have given offence, but it is now so customary that every one understands it. A traditional *bon mot* of Scipio Nasica, seems to bring the saying of "not at home," to a *non plus*. He one day called on Ennius the poet, who, though at home, was denied by his servant. Soon after, Ennius returned the visit, and Scipio himself coming to the door, told him that he was not at home. "Nay!" said Ennius, gravely, "I know that you are; I hear your voice." "You are a fine fellow, indeed," replied Scipio; "when I called

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on you the other day, I believed the maid who told me you were not at home, and now you will not believe me although you hear my own voice affirming it."



## TITLE VIII OF EVENING VISITS

In various tell the instructive hours are past,  
Who race the ball on parlour visit last.

Pope

Evening visits are paid only to those with whom we are well acquainted. They should not be very frequent even where one is intimate, nor should they be much protracted. Frequent visits will gain for a man, in any house, the reputation of tiresome, and long visits will invariably bring down the appellation of *bore*. Morning visits are always extremely brief, being matters of mere ceremony; but the inordinate length which evening visits often endure, is worthy to be 'reformed altogether.' There are many persons who never think of paying an evening visit

of less than two hours, and yet there are not ten people in all the world who are capable of giving continued pleasure by their conversation for that length of time,—still fewer who can do it frequently. I will venture to say that there is no parlour, through which more pleasure would not be diffused by the visitor's coming at the end of the first half-hour than by his remaining through the fourth, even if he were delighting every ear by the brilliance of his speech. The restraint imposed upon the listener is irksome to the last degree, for both body and mind are worn out by such ceaseless sessions.

In a curious volume of 'Observations and Discourses' by Grey Brydges, Lord Chandos, in 1620, there are some shrewd, though rather spleumatic, remarks upon what the writer terms 'visitations.' The condemnation which he gives to the habit of very frequent visits, is judicious and true. "It is the index," says he, "of an idle and unprofitable disposition; a taker up of

time that may be better disposed; and such a spender of time that in few actions it can be worse employed. This vain custom, once begun, induceth a habit not easily lost, therefore not good to begin; and once practised, it is not so safely left, for begun, and not continued, makes the leaving it off esteemed a neglect, which otherwise would be never claimed as a due. And these kind of ceremonies be equally tedious to the complimenter and complimentee, if they reciprocally respect not this fond and dissimulate kind of conversation. And though it often happen that, in some places where they visit, their tedious society be well accepted, which then must only be allowed to such as are of the same occupation, and are even with them in the same kind; yet sometimes it falls out, that thus running over all kind of company, they be to many so unwelcome and troublesome in distracting or diverting their better employments, that often those they come to, conceal themselves upon

## EVENING VISITS

purpose, or suppose some necessary business which calls them away, with intention only to get rid of them, [or perhaps jump out of the window, as Lord Byron used to do, in order to escape from disagreeable visitors]. From which tediousness, if no better employment of their own can divert them, yet the consideration of the unseasonable shifts they put those to whom they visit, should even shame them from frequenting so bad a custom. Yet custom hath so far prevailed, that I dare not prescribe a total neglect; but I counsel to avoid frequent and assidual practice of so superfluous, though received a fashion. Those that duty, love, respect, business or familiarity bind us to, we must observe and visit; lest they interpret our absence to be either in contempt of their persons, or a carelessness and disesteem of their favour and friendship."

Men sometimes presume, for the acceptableness of their presence, upon the personal affection with which they are regarded; but among

people of the world that will go for very little. In the breasts of those who use life extensively, the generous feelings have but small development, the habit of hearing every one coldly and severely discussed, does away with all that reverence which must be the foundation of the highest affections. We must bear in mind that those we frequent will seize the first opportunity of pronouncing us tiresome and of laughing at the commonness of our presence. 'To ensure the preservation of friendship,' says Chevreau, 'it is prudent to place our visits at distant intervals.' 'Continual rain,' says a Jewish axiom, illustrating this position, 'is unpleasant, it is most agreeable when it comes after being wished for. Familiarity is the bane of friendship.'

There is an epigram of Martial on the subject of intimate friendships, which is infinitely just and true.

*Si vitare velis acerta quædam  
Et tristes animi cavere moribus*

## EVENING VISITS

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*Vultu te facias nimis sodalem.*

*Guadebis minus et minus dolere.*

There is a certain ossifying tendency in the atmosphere of the great world which renders ~~the~~ the heart of its denizens callous to those emotions in practical affairs, to which in fancy they may still be susceptible. After we have classified "those whose hearts are a mere muscle, and serve only for the purpose of an even circulation,"\* we should leave but a small portion of the fashionable world uncatalogued. Napoleon was expressing the conclusions of observation, at least as much as those of consciousness, when he exclaimed, "The heart! the heart! Pirrrr! What is the heart but a bit of the body through which passes a great vein, wherein the blood flows faster when you run"† You will be liked as long as you afford pleasure by your visits, but the moment that their length or frequency obliges you to tax good-nature or sympathy for the tole-

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\* Cowper .

† Mémoires de D'Abrantes

rance of that which is no longer gratifying, you will quickly find that you have over-drawn your account. There is a melancholy picture in Mr. Southey's *Life of White*, of the distress to which that amiable and deserving person was reduced. His society had been greatly courted when he was in health; but the moment his spirits forsook him, and he was compelled to "implore company even as a famishing beggar implores food," every door was closed upon him. And if that selfishness prevailed among the young and unworldly, infinitely less charitable will be the tempers of those whose sympathies have been dulled by age, and whose hearts have been made hard by experience.

## TITLE IX.

### OF RECEIVING COMPANY AT HOME.

With breeding finished, and with temper sweet,  
When serious, easy, and when gay, discreet

Young

To entertain company without any embarrassment or excitement, without attracting attention or protruding yourself upon the notice of your guests, is an art only to be acquired by long usage and practised with great tact. Behaviour at home is one of the best touchstones of breeding; many behave well abroad who cannot exhibit ease under their own roof. We find a number of persons who seem to be in a perpetual fever while there is company in their house,—who are running about under a nervous determination that people shall be entertained and



entertaining,—who are begging people to *fest* themselves at home, hoping that they enjoy themselves, &c. This denotes an utter want of *ton*; it is done by men who have spent the best days of their manhood behind a desk, and have come at length to the exercise of wealth, without any of the habits or manners that should adorn its illustration. A gentleman, on such occasions, is quiet and calm; he seems to do nothing, though in fact he does a great deal. He goes about with composure and self-possession; and no one could tell by his behaviour that he was not one of the guests.

Ladies make a point of not being much dressed in their own houses; the reason assigned being that some of the company may happen not to be highly dressed. This, I confess, seems to be but an indifferent compliment to her guests; but usage has settled its necessity.

When Scott dined with Sir Robert Peel, he observed that the baronet took the lead in con-

Conversation in his own house, which he would not do elsewhere. I have generally found the practice of the best-bred men to be the reverse; and I think that course is better, for the reason that most persons find it more agreeable to talk than to listen. The host should open the conversation at dinner, if no one else will do it,—set it fairly a-going,—and then hand it over to others. After that, his part is to supply all the gaps and vacancies that occur; to stimulate it when it flags, and to give it a new direction, if it gets on an objectionable bias, to give effect to the unfinished remarks of others; to see that every good shaft hits; and to control, steer, and moderate the talk, but not monopolize it. To take up a topic, say the best thing upon it, and then turn it over to the rest, is not very courtly. It was in this way that Scott told Mr. Adolphus that the Duke of Wellington debated; “he slices the argument,” said he, “into two or three parts, and helps himself to the best.”

## RECEIVING COMPANY AT HOME

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However numerous may be the company which you are entertaining, you should make a point of paying some attention peculiarly to each of your guests, and exchanging some conversation with all. This should not be done in that formal and perfunctory manner which we sometimes see, when the host goes round his room, saying a few frigid words to every one, or taking a glass of wine with half a dozen at a time, with a stiff exactness that conveys no compliment because it denotes no feeling. You should throw something of warmth and particularity into your address to each, causing, by the interest you indicate, every one to imagine that he is the object of your chief regard. Let each be made to think that it is he especially whom you delight to honour.

More care should be taken in assorting those whom you bring together, than generally prevails in American society. Most persons when they have decided on giving a dinner, send out invitations to the right and left, either without any se-

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Argon at all, or with such a choice as depends not on the mutual harmony of the tastes, tempers and pursuits of the invited, but on each one's own individual distinction or his intimacy with the entertainer. Accordingly when one enters a drawing-room on such an occasion, one cannot help exclaiming,

Just what a motley group the scene discloses!— for it is often apparent at a glance that not a single interesting topic can possibly be introduced and discussed which will not give offence or uneasiness to some one, and no style of manner can prevail which will not thwart some one's taste or inclination. A refined and sensitive man of letters is seated between an Arab whose thoughts never wander beyond the precincts of the Stock-alley, and a politician whose turbulent spirit is occupied with nothing but the returns from this State or that county, and one party will taste the delicacy of Walpole and the sentiment of Gray, as much as the other will relish the jargon of the

money-market or the filth of the polls. A high-born man, whose hourly thoughts are bristling with contempt for business, and horror at the levelling doctrines of democracy, is supported on the one hand by a coarse and vulgar set, and on the other by some upstart radical with whom Jacobinism is a religion, and enmity to rank is a matter of conscience. It is fortunate, too, if in this ill-combined assemblage, there is not also a plentiful sprinkling of personal hostilities. How can conversation flourish or pleasure be diffused, when the minds of the party are thus mutually abhorrent, when the chaste wit of a portion is interrupted by some low topic from the hustings, or the ease and equanimity of the company is broken up by some sharp-shooting between violent foes? We are told that the custom of challenging a man to drink wine arose from a habit that prevailed at the feast-board in the days of Saxon savageness, when a guest found it necessary to call upon a friend to protect him while he drank, lest some-

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body should stab him while the glass was at his lips. When one casts an eye about a table encircled by such as we have described, among whom there prevails, in mind or heart, not only no sympathy, but a strong antipathy, one can hardly help thinking it might be useful if this primitive usage were revived. If there be no danger of the sword being put in requisition, there is more than danger that the guests will "shoot out their arrows — even bitter words."

"If thou be made the master of a feast," says the author of Ecclesiasticks, "lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest, take diligent care for them, and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast." He who calls people together in his own house should consider himself bound to the same duties of ministration as anciently rested upon the archon of the feast. He should consider himself,

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for the nonce, the servant of his friends, and his acts should aid their comfort rather than his own illustration. He should play a second part, and neither in manner nor remark “over-crow” any one. Every kind of ostentation which can mortify the humblest of his guests, should be avoided. His object should be to make his company enjoy themselves, rather than to afford them enjoyment. To enlarge upon the subject of his furniture or picture,—to throw others into the shade by the emphasis of his manner or the display of his conversation,—to impair any one’s comfort so much as must be done by wounding his self-love—is to be guilty of a very uncourteous breach of the obligations which good-breeding has attached to the office he has assumed.

It is taking a great and very indebate liberty with a person to invite him as an equal and on terms of friendship, to your house, only for the purpose of displaying him for your own amusement or that of other guests. The civility that

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is inspired by vanity of this kind, when a man is sent for not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity; not to be entertained so much as wondered at, when the same earnestness which excites them to see their guest, would have made them equally proud of a visit from a rhinoceros," is not merely worthless but it is pernicious. You not only pay the person no real compliment at all, when you invite him to contribute to nothing but the gratification of your own vanity, but you betray him into circumstances which may be very annoying and humiliating to him. You have no right to mount a man up without regard to his wishes or feelings, merely to gain a passing *clot* for your drawing-room. There are, to be sure, distinguished persons who are proud to be considered as show-beasts, and who are more delighted the more eyes are upon them—such you may safely assemble a company to look at, nor care how much they are picked to pieces by the spectators. But there are many



other persons of eminence belonging to the first class of society, who are invariably disgusted by that kind of exhibition, and there are many more, whose station is less unpivotal, who are deeply indignant at that sort of invitation, and if they find that they are invited not as ordinary guests, but as fiddlers for the rest of the company, which distinction they are very jealous in suspecting, they never fail to resent it as a deep insult. If you find in your own house that any of your company are inclined to treat in this wise any one whom you have invited from no such selfish vanity, you should avoid everything that looks like such an intention, in your own manner, and should endeavour to check the freedom of others, as much as you can. You are to consider your guests as being under your protection, and having, by inviting them as equals and on terms of ordinary courtesy, given an implied assurance that nothing should occur under your roof to disturb that relation, you are in honour bound to prevent

these encroachments upon this equal condition, which any of your company may be inclined to make. Dr. Johnson, who had an intolerant disgust at "being made a zany of," as he expressed it made it a rule whenever he discovered that he was invited to talk only to gratify the curiosity of the company, to maintain a profound silence during the whole of the entertainment.

Private concerts, or parties invited for the sole purpose of playing and singing, are apt to be, like Milton's nightingale,

"Most musical, most melancholy,"

but the introduction of music at an ordinary party, when it is unexpected, has generally a very agreeable effect. When people assemble in a small company at nine o'clock, there is something rather appalling in the necessity which lies before them of entertaining and being entertained for the space of two hours, and this prospect is apt to be somewhat heavily upon the spirits,

giving dullness to conversation and uneasiness to the temper. It is therefore <sup>best</sup> at <sup>length</sup> to find the piano opened, and to know that the necessity of talking is at an end, and that you are at liberty either to converse or listen, as you choose.

If you cannot introduce music when you are entertaining evening company, you may advantageously assist the colloquial fluency of your guests, by laying before them matters which will furnish ready topics of conversation, or break up the formality of the circle by calling the company to direct their curiosity to a single point. Pictures or drawings of persons, buildings, scenes or sites that happen to be interesting and fresh in the fashionable world,—specimens of a new style of work or of curious *antiquaries* lately discovered,—something of this kind should be brought forward to assist remark and relieve attention. Care should be taken, however, that the consideration of the company is not forced to

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any of these things, beyond what is perfectly voluntary and agreeable.—else the thing will become a bore. It is very stupid for an entertainer to compel his guest to follow him while he turns over a book of engravings and calls upon them to express a vulgar admiration which it is both annoying and difficult to do in proper terms.

TITLE X.  
OF THE AMUSEMENTS OF A GENTLEMAN.

*His afternoons he passes in visits, luncheons,  
Loungeing and boxing*

TOMMY BARON

In the employment of those who are the most devoted to business, and in the occupation of those the most engaged in society, there occur many hours which are naturally and necessarily assigned to amusement. To all men, those are hours of danger, and every judicious man will take care to provide, for such seasons, some ready and inviting undertaking to which he can turn, the moment he is idle.

It should be the first care of every man who values the refinement of his mind and manners, of his thoughts and conversation, as well as of every man of virtue, to avoid those amusements

which partake of a voluptuous and indelicate nature. Incontinence is sure to degrade and brutify. No man can use it habitually without its effects appearing in all his character. It will coarsen his taste, so that he can no longer relish or endure the refined society which it was once his pride to cultivate. It will coarsen his conversation so that he can no longer succeed in it. It was rightly feigned that the gods made themselves beasts, when they descended to unlawful amours.

Dancing is cultivated in youth as an essential part of education. A gentleman, who from frequent usage has acquired a taste for it, and in whose mind it is connected with the recollection of very agreeable scenes, will generally find it a pleasant recreation for his unoccupied time. Martin, the poet and preacher, and one of the greatest novelists of modern times, was so fascinated with its delights, that in his late years, he did little else than dance, alone or in com-

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pauſe, from morning till night. It is a healthful exerciſe; and its influence upon the poſture and gracefulness of the form and carriage is highly important. No man will go into company unleſs he finds himſelf at eaſe when he is there; and certainly no man can ſhine in it, unleſs his motion and manners are marked by elegance and finiſh. Theſe exerciſes ſhould, as often as poſſible, be performed under the eye of a maſter; that ſuperintendence being, in almoſt every art, quite as neceſſary during the hours of practice, as for the buſineſs of inſtruction.

Fencing is a thing very proper to be exerciſed by a gentleman; and it is ſo agreeable that in the inclination of any one who is familiar with it, it will yield in attraction to few ſorts of amuſement. It develops the frame admirably; and gives freedom and ſelf-poſſeſſion to the carriage. It is a manlier diſcipline than dancing; and for the ſtreet, the effects of the one are as much better as thoſe of the other are more pro-

## AMUSEMENTS OF A GENTLEMAN

fitable for the drawing-room. Boating is a noble exercise, and ought not to be neglected. Its vigour and stoutness form an excellent corrective of that effeminacy which the atmosphere of the *salon* is apt to inspire; and the courage which it imparts, gives substance and solidity to the graces of good-breeding.

There is, however, reason to apprehend that, to one familiar with the excitement of society, the plain diversions which all will pronounce harmless, will carry with them too little stimulus to render themselves acceptable. There is one amusement against which the warning of moralists has sometimes been raised, and yet which in this connection and under the circumstances and limitations that grow out of it, seems free from objection, I allude to novel-reading. The perusal of good romances is as harmless and as useful, when they are taken up by way of entertainment and for the filling up of a vacant half-hour, as their best use is baneful, when they are



made the business of life. To the very young, and those who are hurried in the world, they are probably prejudicial; but a man, mature years and principles, who has navigated all the streams and canals of society, may indulge in their perusal as far as his taste may suggest, not only without injury but probably with great advantage. There are many practices of moderate excitement which may be condemned, on the one hand, as leading to greater excitements, and, on the other, approved, as detaining from them. To determine their moral influence, we must cast a balance between these tendencies. A boy, who is ignorant of life, is led by novels nearer to that scene which in his unripe condition may endanger his integrity, but it is plain that when a man of society,—a man who has tried and been tried, by the world in all its most alluring shapes,—takes up a novel, he passes from the greater to the less, and lays down the reality to be amused with its shadow. He can find, in his double-

cinemas, nothing more dangerous than what he has already felt at home; and he may find much that will raise him far above his common level.

The objection that is sometimes raised, in theory, to familiarity with works of fiction, that they habituate the imagination to the airy scenes of the false and the impossible, too much to render it fit for the actual business of life, would seem to be confuted, with the most practical completeness, in the career of Sir Walter Scott; a man who living habitually in a visionary world, yet retained in action all the vigour of his temper and all the clearness of his mind. It is possible that the old romances which were crowded with the terrors of a supernatural world, might disturb the fancy more than would be consistent with the strength and composure of all the faculties. But the fictions now in vogue draw their scenes and incidents from the real world: if the reader is conversed in actual life, his habitual dreams and imaginings will be still more untrue

and hurtful ~~than~~ the falsest picture thus presented to him; and ~~that he was surprised in the world, those pictures can do him no harm.~~

Accordingly some of the greatest men have resorted usually to this method of diverting their unoccupied time. Lord Camden relieved the judicial tedium of the wool-sack by a regular perusal of all the novels that appeared. St. Evremond was constantly reading Don Quixote, and began it anew when he had finished it once. Longueville relates that La Rochefoucault, the author of the Maxims, was greatly given to the reading of romances all his life. yet that, in no wise, embarrassed or obscured his perceptions of the actual around him. The mind of Mackintosh was never impaired by those habits of reverie in which he tells us he was wont to indulge, fancying himself the Sultan dwelling at Constantinople and distributing favours to his ~~subjects.~~

THE END.















